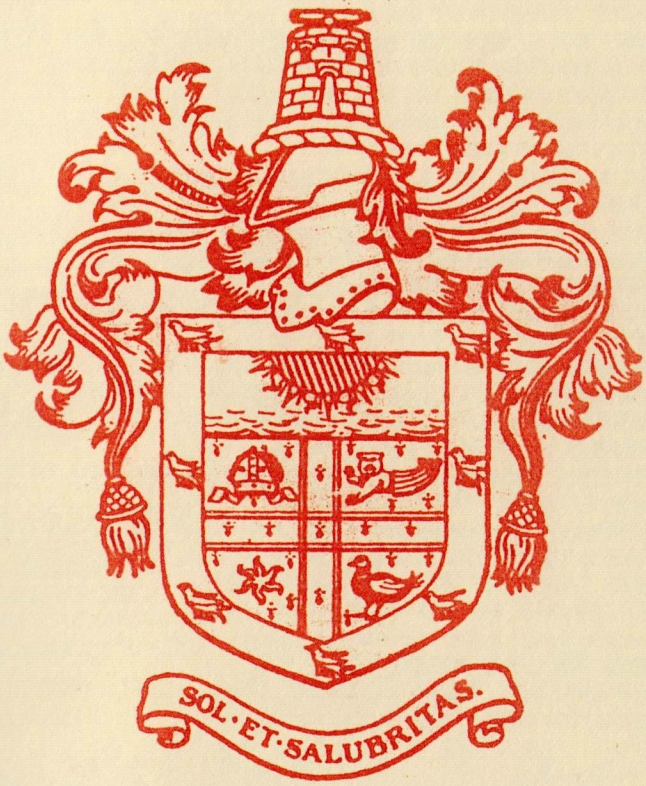
" A SALUTE TO ALL WHO HAVE SERVED BEXHILL "



BY D.A.SEARSON.

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Front cover
Bexhill Coat of Arms

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To Heather
With
Best Wishes
and great regard for
Past Associations
when Secretary
D A Smith
28th November
2003

FOREWORD

It would be difficult to find a more fitting way to celebrate the forthcoming amalgamation of Bexhill's two museums - *the Bexhill Museum (founded in 1914) and the Bexhill Museum of Costume & Social History (established 1972)* - than to recall the efforts of those of past generations who helped develop the town over a period of 1300 years and thereby enabled it to secure the honoured Borough status which was held for more than 70 years. Bexhill residents may have their own preferences but it is hoped that the 50 or so people profiled in the following pages will be taken as representative of all who have helped establish Anglo-Saxon culture, the Christian tradition and/or given great service to the town, county and country.

As seen from the profiles selected, a fascinating history lies behind the facades of attractive Victorian and Edwardian Bexhill buildings. Many road names have historic significance.

Bexhill is an unique south coast town which endeavours to maintain a long recognised reputation for providing attentive customer service with 'oldtime' courtesy. Its distinctive De La Warr Pavilion (see page 96) is renowned for mounting critically acclaimed Exhibitions and providing in its 1000 seat theatre entertainment aimed to satisfy all tastes ranging from 'variety to drama', 'popular to classical', and 'light musical to operatic'.

The town's attraction is enhanced by its proximity to more cosmopolitan Eastbourne (15 miles west), Brighton (33 miles west) and London (67 miles north). Bexhill can be reached by direct train service from all three.

The Bexhill Tourist Information Centre will not only advise concerning available hotel, guesthouse and self-catering holiday flats but also assist in reserving accommodation.

Bexhill Tourist Information Centre
51 Marina, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 1BQ. Tel. 01424 730298

The appeal of Bexhill to visitors is further enhanced by many historic attractions to be visited in the near vicinity. Brief details of some of the many are given below:

BATTLE (11 miles north) - famed for ruined Norman Abbey and the location of the battlefield where William Duke of Normandy defeated the Anglo-Saxons in 1066. His victory determined future English history. A place of historic interest to the French visitor (see page 10).

HASTINGS (5 miles east). Famed for ruined 11th century Norman Castle and its colourful 'old town' (see pages 10 & 13).

WINCHELSEA & RYE (15 and 17 miles east respectively). Two of the Cinque Ports and of particular interest to the Flemish Belgian, Dutch and French visitor in the light of historic alliances in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, the victory in 1340 of Edward III's Cinque Ports 'fleet' at the Battle of Sluys and the impressive "Grand Pageant of the Golden Tree" held in Bruges (only a few hours via the Channel tunnel) at five year intervals to commemorate the marriage in 1468 of Margaret of York (sister of Edward IV of England) to Charles the Bold, Count of Flanders and Duke of Burgundy (see pages 17 & 18).

FIRLE (20 miles west) Delightfully located stately home of the Gage family for more than 500 years. Of interest to the American visitor as General Thomas Gage was British C-in-C on the outbreak of the War of American Independence.

SHEFFIELD PARK (33 miles north-west) Attractive garden and parkland famous for rare plants, bushes and trees. Of particular appeal to visitors from Holland - also from Australia in view of the 'Sheffield Shield' connection.

BODIAM (15 miles north) noted for fascinating 12th century historic Castle restored by Lord Curzon, onetime Viceroy of India and great conservationist. (see page 71)

BURWASH (22 miles north) Location of Batemans - delightfully located home from 1902 till death in 1936 of Rudyard Kipling, author and poet with Indian connections. Popular with all English speaking people (see page 76).

EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN SUSSEX

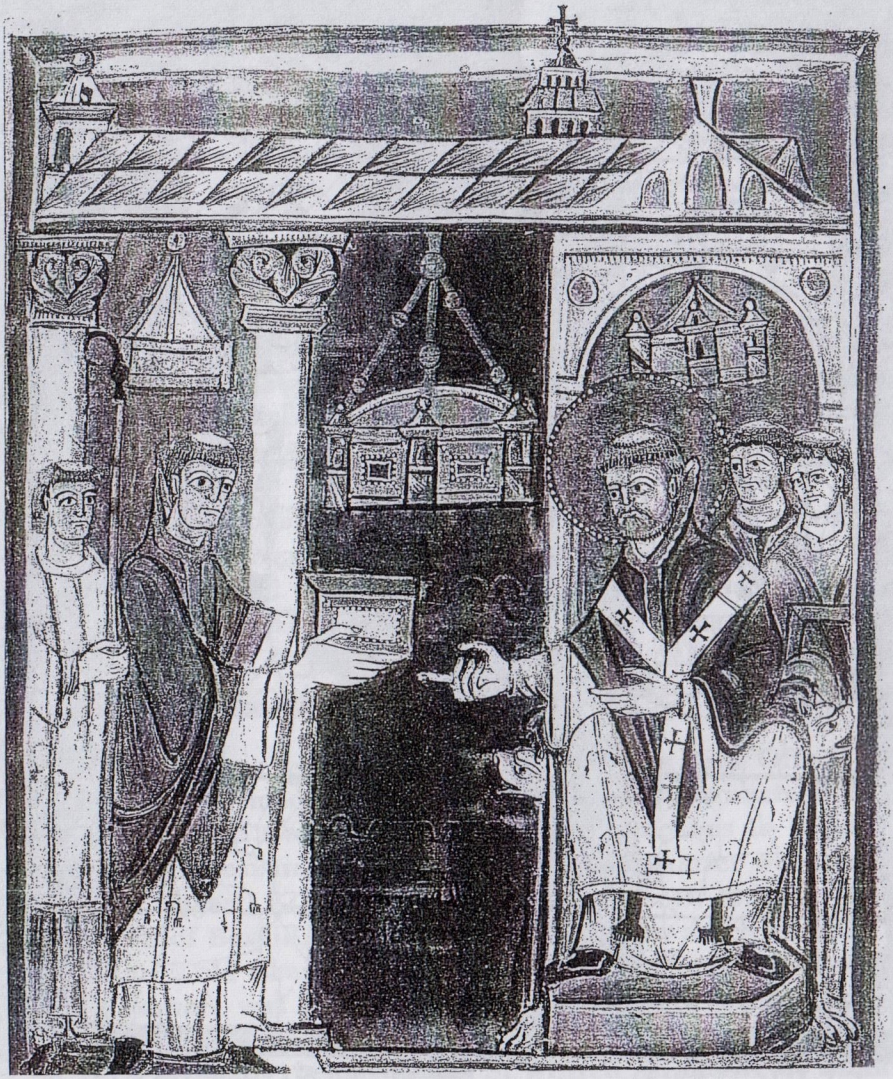
Whilst the actual date of Christ's birth is uncertain, records indicate he was born between 6 and 4 B.C. in the reign of King Herod and crucified between 29 and 33 A.D. during the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate. It is concluded, he was most likely born in 4 B.C. The Gregorian calendar, establishing dates for major Christian Festivals, was only introduced as recently as 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII.

The primary objective of this work is to highlight events and people who influenced the development of Bexhill and Sussex during the course of the 2nd Millennium. Christianity played no small part. It would not have been unknown here during Roman times for Emperor Constantine in 375 A.D. made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Following the withdrawal of the Roman legions in 406 A.D., Britain was invaded over a period of some 200 years by the Angles, Saxons and Jutes from northern Germany.

By the end of the 8th century we find the country divided into the seven kingdoms of Kent, Sussex, Essex, East Anglia, Wessex, Mercia and Northumbria. Each sought supremacy over the others. First Northumbria - then Mercia (under Offa) and finally Wessex (under Ecgbert - followed by his grandson, Alfred) attained that supremacy.

St.Augustine was entrusted by Pope Gregory the Great with the mission of evangelising Britain. He landed with some 40 followers at Ebbsfleet (Ramsgate), Kent, in 597 A.D. He was cautiously received by Ethelbert , King of Kent and overlord of tribes south of the Humber. Whilst successful in converting the Kentish people to Christianity (including Ethelbert in 601 A.D.), the conversion of Sussex (the South Saxons) is attributed to St.Wilfred some 80 years later.



POPE GREGORY THE GREAT
SENDS ST. AUGUSTINE
TO ENGLAND IN 596 A.D.

Stained glass windows - Lady Chapel, St.Peter's Church
Bexhill Old Town Church 'founded' by King Offa 772 A.D.

ST.WILFRED

633 - 709 A.D.

Wilfred, born in Northumbria in 633 A.D., was educated at Lindisfarne, centre of Irish culture and learning. He took the tonsure in Lyons. On returning to England, he became Abbot of Ripon where he introduced the monastic rule of St.Benedict. Approved by Alcfrith, he received episcopal consecration as Bishop of York at Compiegne. On his return in 666 A.D. he found King Oswiu had chosen Chad to supplant him. He was reinstated in 669 by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury.

In collaboration with King Egfrith, in 678 A.D. the Archbishop divided the Northumbrian diocese into four parts. Wilfred appealed to Rome and the Pope ruled in his favour. Unacceptable,however, to Egfrith, Wilfred was barred from the kingdom. And so, in 681 A.D. he came to Sussex and established a monastery and episcopal see at Selsey which remained until transferred by the Normans in 1075 to Chichester. Wilfred was re-instated in Northumbria in 686 A.D. by Theodore with diminished jurisdiction. Prevailing differences were resolved in 705, when Wilfred resigned the see of York and accepted complete jurisdiction of the diocese of Hexham.

The Anglo-Saxons were eventually conquered by King Offa II of Mercia who made a grant of 8 hides (approximately 500 acres) to Bishop Oswald of Selsey with instructions to build a Church at the existing manor of Bixlea - the Charter was dated the 15th August, 772 A.D. A Saxon village, seen today as the Old Town of Bexhill, developed around the now much altered 12 centuries old Church of St.Peter. The Bexhill Stone, mounted in the tower, was discovered under the south aisle during extensive alterations in 1878. It is reputed by some to be the lid of a reliquary belonging to St.Wilfred. A mural by Alan Sorrel and a stained glass window in Bexhill's Church of St.Peter and also a combined statue in the Church of St.Mary Magdalene portray St. Wilfred and St.Richard de Wych.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

1027 - 1087

KING OF ENGLAND & DUKE OF NORMANDY

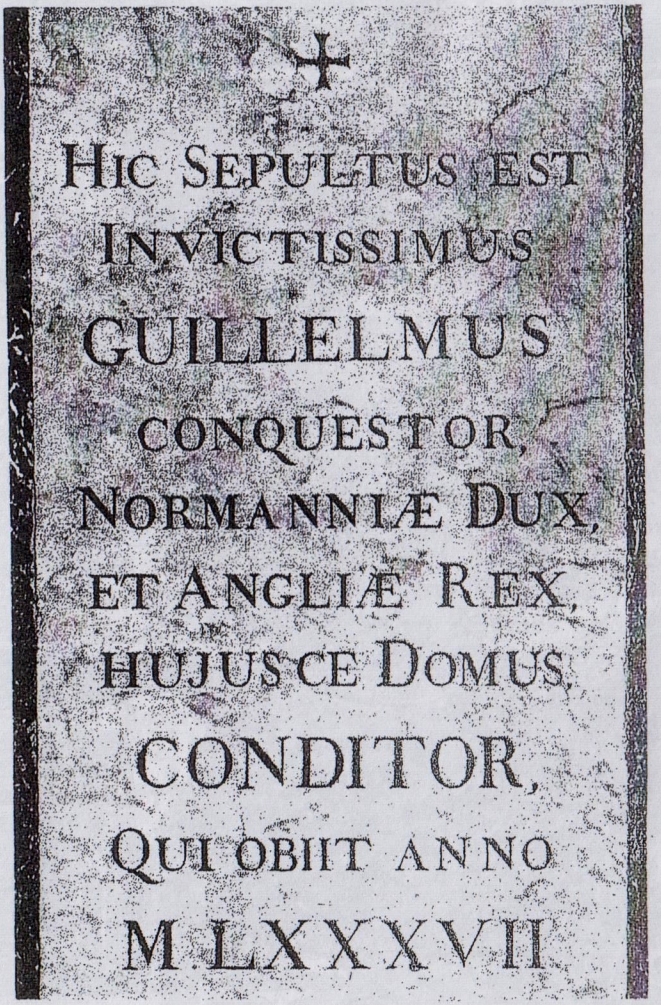
William, illegitimate son of Robert Duke of Normandy, was born at Falaise in 1027. He inherited his father's Duchy of Normandy in 1035 at the age of eight. The Normans were originally Vikings who settled in north-west France in the early 10th century. Under the leadership of Rollo, they created a powerful "state" around the mouth of the Seine and became Counts and later Dukes of Normandy.

William had remote claim to the English throne by reason of his great aunt, Emma, being the mother of Edward the Confessor. On a visit to Edward in 1051, he received promise of succession to the English throne. In 1052, William married Matilda of Flanders, daughter of Count Baldwin V and descendant of Alfred the Great and Charlemagne - they had ten children.

When Harold (Earl of Wessex and brother-in-law of Edward) took the English throne on the death of Edward, William invaded at or near Pevensey. In return for "military" support, large areas of the country were promised to his "commanders" for the establishment of new feudal Lordships. Harold was defeated on the 14th October, 1066, at the Battle of Hastings. William was crowned King of England in Westminster Abbey on the 25th December, 1066.

In 1085, William ordered a Survey of England - the results were recorded in the Domesday Book - an interesting fact to emerge was that the size of the population of the country at that time was a mere two million people.

William died in Rouen on the 9th September, 1087, following a fall from his horse whilst besieging Nantes. He lies buried in Caen in the Abbey Church of St.Etienne.



Inscription above tomb of William the Conqueror buried in the Abbey Church of St.Etienne in Caen.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

KING OF ENGLAND - DUKE OF NORMANDY

Born: 1027 Crowned: 25th December, 1066 Died: 1087

KING OFFA OF MERCIA

757 - 796 A.D.

FOUNDER - ST.PETER'S CHURCH, BEXHILL 772 A.D.

ROBERT COUNT OF EU
LORD OF THE RAPE OF HASTINGS

Following the Conquest, Sussex was divided into five Rapes (later becoming six). William granted his cousin, Robert Count of Eu, the Rape of Hastings which included the Bexhill Hundred. The adjoining Rape of Pevensey was granted to his half-brother Robert, Earl of Mortain.

Robert, Count of Eu - granted some 150 acres from the Bexhill Hundred to his favourite foundation, the French Benedictine Abbey of Treport. This became the Manor of Pebsham which with other Treport holdings was conveyed in 1176 to the Cistercian Abbey at Robertsbridge.

Count Robert added a tower to Offa's Bexhill Saxon Church and on founding the Collegiate Church of St.Mary in Hastings Castle made Bexhill with Bulverhythe the second of its ten prebends. The gift of a house was made to the Bexhill prebend by a Robert Creol whom Domesday names as holding land in the village - from this the manor house developed.

Domesday also records that Count Robert retained three hides as his demesne, leased ten to one Osbern, donated one hide as part of the prebend's endowment and leased the remainder.

The Church contested the loss of its Bexhill lands. Count John (Robert's grandson) acknowledged that lands had been disposed of unjustly and in 1148 restoration was made to Bishop Hilary and the See of Chichester. The house donated by Robert Creol became the residence of the Bishops of Chichester and used for visitations in the eastern part of the diocese. Its importance was raised in 1447 when Bishop Adam de Moleyns was licensed to embattle it. The most famous bishops associated with Bexhill were Ralph Nevill who made additions to Offa's Church and St.Richard de Wych who died in 1253 on a journey from Bexhill to Dover.

ST. RICHARD DE WYCH

1197 - 1253

Richard was born at Droitwich in 1197. He was forced to interrupt his education to help his brother save the family farm. This achieved he resumed his studies at Oxford - followed by Paris and Bologna. In 1235, he was elected Chancellor of Oxford University. In 1236, St. Edmund of Abingdon, Archbishop of Canterbury, made him Provincial Chancellor.

On Edmund's death in 1240, Richard decided to become a priest. Following ordination, he was parish priest at Charing and Deal. Boniface, successor of Edmund as archbishop, reappointed him Provincial Chancellor.

Richard was elected Bishop of Chichester in 1244 by a Provincial Synod and endorsed by Boniface. The rival election of Richard Passelew by the Chapter was favoured by Henry III. Richard de Wych was consecrated in 1245 by Innocent III in Lyons. On his return, Richard found the king had issued an edict forbidding support. The edict was revoked in 1247 when Innocent III threatened the king with excommunication.

St.Richard's "symbol" (as depicted in the mural by Alan Sorrel in St. Peter's Church in Bexhill) is the fig-tree which he is said to have grown in Sussex during the years of being "persona non grata" to the king. In the Lady Chapel of the Church, a stained glass window portrays the saint alongside that of Wilfred and in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene we find a combined statue of Richard and Wilfred. The mosaics in the Church at Droitwich brilliantly depict scenes from Richard's life and are worth seeing.

St.Richard died at Dover on the 3rd April, 1253. He would most likely have stayed prior to the journey at the Bexhill Manor house which was diocesan church property at that time.

ST.WILFRED
BISHOP OF YORK
633 - 709 A.D.

ST.RICHARD
BISHOP OF CHICHESTER
1197 - 1253 A.D.

Mural in St.Peter's Church, Old Town, Bexhill (Painted by Alan Sorrell 1951)
St.Wilfred (Apostle to South Saxons) at rear. **St.Richard de Wyche in front.**

EDWARD I
KING OF ENGLAND

Born: 1239 Succeeded: 1272 Crowned: 1274 Died: 1307

Sculpted head of Edward I above Tomb of Gervase Alard (Admiral of Cinque Ports Fleet) in Church of St.Thomas~The Martyr, Winchelsea, East Sussex

EDWARD I

1239 - s.1272 - 1307

KING OF ENGLAND

The exact date of the founding of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports of Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich is unknown - but it was certainly in existence for the mutual protection and trading advantages of participating south coast towns during the time of Edward the Confessor. By the 13th century, the Confederation had been joined by Rye and Winchelsea and was looked to by monarchs to supply quotas of ships and men for the defence of the realm. Winchelsea was the greatest contributor.

The terrible storms of 1250 and 1287 caused havoc - completely submerging the old town. Such was the importance of Winchelsea that Edward I founded in 1288 a new town on the heights of Iham dominated by the uncompleted Church of St.Thomas the Martyr. The new town followed the grid system of the 'bastide' towns of Edward's Duchy of Aquitaine. The King undertook regular tours of inspection to ensure the adequacy of coastal defences.

Edward, son of Henry III, was born at Westminster in 1239. He married firstly Eleanor of Castile in 1254, by whom he had 16 children and then secondly, in 1299, Margaret of France by whom he had 3 children. Edward and Eleanor were crowned in 1274 - they were away on Crusade when Henry died in 1272.

In the great Church of St.Thomas the Martyr, we find Edward depicted in an impressive stained-glass window holding the plans of "his" new Church and also his sculpted head on a corbel above the tomb of Gervase Alard who, a resident of the town, he had appointed Admiral of the Cinque Ports Fleet in 1303, and then Admiral of the Western fleet in 1306.

Edward died on the 7th July, 1307, at the age of 68.

EDWARD III

1312 - s.1327 - 1377

KING OF ENGLAND

Edward III, son of Edward II and Isabella of France, was born at Windsor on the 13th November, 1312. He succeeded his deposed father and was crowned in Westminster Abbey on the 1st February, 1327. The following year he married Philippa of Hainault,aged 16 - they had 7 sons (including the Black Prince, and John of Gaunt - born 1340 in Ghent) and 5 daughters.

During the 14th century and the 100 Years War, the coastal towns of East Sussex (particularly the Cinque Ports) were subject to French incursions. Winchelsea, it is said, was raided seven times. The Battle of Winchelsea took place in 1350 when the English attacked a Spanish fleet (allies of France) in the Channel. Edward's command ship was the cog "Thomas" of Winchelsea. Complete victory achieved - Edward joined Philippa at Udimore and the following day attended a solemn service of thanksgiving at the Church of St. Thomas. On the 15th March, 1360, revenge was taken when three thousand Frenchmen subjected Winchelsea to terrible assault, destruction pillage and rape.

In 1339, the Flemish cloth towns, made desperate by the English wool embargo, appealed to Edward to assume the throne of France (by reason of his mother Isabella being the daughter of Philip IV). Edward set sail with a fleet of some 200 ships and, on the 24th June,1340, destroyed some 200 French, Genoese and Spanish ships at the famous Battle of Sluys in the then unsilted Zwin estuary. This success gave Edward sufficient control of the Channel to launch his Normandy invasion at St.Vaast on the Cherbourg Peninsula some 6 years later - a feat culminating in his victory at Crecy on the 26th August,1346.

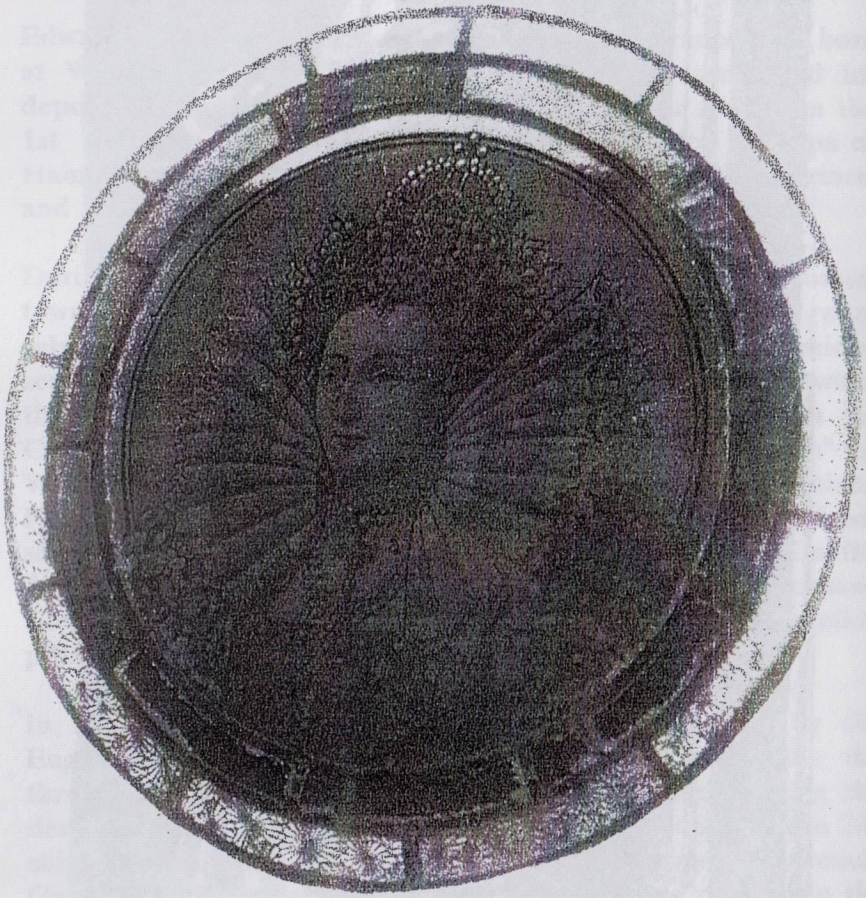
Philippa died 1369. Edward died from senile dementia in 1377.

EDWARD III

KING OF ENGLAND

BORN: 1312 SUCCEEDED: 1327 DIED: 1377

(Figure believed to represent Edward III - West Door Lincoln Cathedral)



ELIZABETH I

QUEEN OF ENGLAND

BORN: 1533 SUCCEEDED: 1588 D IED; 1603

(Portrait in stained glass window - Bexhill Town Hall Council Chamber)

ELIZABETH I

1533 - s.1558 - 1603

QUEEN OF ENGLAND

Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, was born at Greenwich Palace, on the 7th September, 1533.
She succeeded to the throne on the death of her half-sister, Mary I, on the 17th November, 1558.

The country's prosperity greatly increased during her long reign. Between 1530 and 1600, the population of London quadrupled - from 50,000 to 200,000 (allowing for the death of some 17,000 people in London from the plague in 1563/4).

Twelve years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in the year 1588, Queen Elizabeth granted, on the last day of 1600, a Royal Charter to the East India Company for the purpose of developing trade in the East.

Sir Thomas Sackville was her second cousin - she granted him the Knole estate in 1566, created him 1st Baron Buckhurst in 1567, and granted him the Bexhill estate in 1570.

He maintained the friendship and confidence of his cousin throughout her long reign.

An interesting feature highlights the Elizabeth-Sackville connection in the Council Chamber of the Bexhill Town Hall used by Rother District Council.. "A portrait" of Elizabeth I looks down from a stained glass window on proceedings below - placed there to commemorate the historic connection (or perhaps with a wicked sense of humour to convey that for unsatisfactory service in the 16th century, it was "To the Tower and off with their heads").

Elizabeth died at Richmond Palace on the 24th March, 1603.

EARLY SACKVILLE ANCESTRY

The Sackvilles were of Danish origin and had settled in Normandy prior to the Conquest of 1066. Herbrand de Salcheville or Salkaville took his name from the village of Sauqueville (located between Dieppe and Longueville). Herbrand regularly features as a forename of later Sackvilles e.g. the 9th and 10th Earls De La Warr. Herbrand Walk exists in Cooden immediately adjacent to the Cooden Beach Hotel..

In the early 13th century Jourdan de Sackville married Ela Dene - heiress to the Buckhurst estate. The original Buckhurst Park (in ruins) was replaced by the present 18th c. mansion located nearby at Withyham.

Sir Richard Sackville, a man of wealth and property, was a cousin of Anne Boleyn, mother of Queen Elizabeth I.

THOMAS SACKVILLE

1ST BARON BUCKHURST - 1ST EARL OF DORSET

1536 - 1608

Sir Thomas Sackville, son of Richard, was born in 1536, and died on the 19th April 1608.

Queen Elizabeth I granted him in 1566 the great estate of Knole, near Sevenoaks in Kent; created him in 1567 1st Baron Buckhurst ; and granted him in 1570 the Bexhill estate.

Lord Buckhurst maintained the friendship and confidence of Queen Elizabeth; held great offices of State as Lord High Steward etc.; he was a Knight of the Garter; Chancellor of Oxford and entrusted with the leadership of embassies to France and the Low Countries.

He was created 1st Earl of Dorset on the accession of James I.

THOMAS SACKVILLE

1ST EARL OF DORSET

BORN: 1536 DIED: 1608

GENERAL SIR JOHN CLAVERING

C-IN-C BENGAL ARMY - COUNCIL MEMBER

BORN: 1722 DIED: 1777

GENERAL SIR JOHN CLAVERING

(1722 - 1777)
C-IN-C BENGAL ARMY
& MEMBER OF WARREN HASTING'S COUNCIL

General Sir John Clavering , Commander-in-Chief of the East India Company's Bengal Army, was married to Lady Diana West, daughter of the 1st Earl De La Warr.

It should be noted that the De La Warr family name was West prior to introduction of the Sackville name on the occasion of the marriage of Elizabeth Sackville to George West in 1813 to make the then accepted name of Sackville-West. George West succeeded as 5th Earl De La Warr in 1843.

A Clavering Walk is located in Cooden off Cooden Sea Road.

Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773 sought to clarify and establish the position of the East India Company in relationship to the Crown and also to limit its responsibilities as the instrument of Government acting on behalf of the Crown through Parliament.

The Act established the office of Governor-General with a Council of Four. Warren Hastings, as Governor of Bengal, was appointed Governor-General. Sir John Clavering, as Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army, was appointed as a member of his Council with Richard Barwell, Francis Day and Colonel Monson for a 5 year term.

JOHN FREDERICK SACKVILLE

1745 - 1799

3RD DUKE OF DORSET

The 1st Baron Buckhurst was created 1st Earl of Dorset by James I in 1603. On the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the 7th Earl of Dorset, Lionel Sackville, was entrusted with the mission which announced the Hanoverian succession. In 1720, the Hanoverian King George I created him 1st Duke of Dorset and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

John Frederick Sackville, nephew of the 2nd Duke, succeeded to the title in 1769. He married Arabella, daughter and heiress of Sir Charles Cope - they had one son and two daughters. The son, George Sackville, succeeded in 1799 on the death of his father. Killed in a hunting accident in 1815 - the 4th Duke died unmarried and so the title passed to a cousin. The 5th Duke also died unmarried and so the title became extinct.

The daughters of the 3rd Duke, Mary and Elizabeth, became co-heiresses of the Sackville estates.

Mary predeceased her sister and so both the Buckhurst and Bexhill estates passed to the De La Warrs since Elizabeth had married George West in 1813 (later 5th Earl De La Warr).

The Sackvilles (particularly the 2nd & 3rd Dukes) were great patrons and exponents of cricket. Ballads were written about the prowess of the 3rd Duke - he appeared for Kent for some 10 years and was present at the Star & Garter in 1774 when Rules were revised. He was a founder member of the M.C.C.

John Frederick Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset died in 1799. Impressive memorial monuments to the 3rd Duke of Dorset, his wife Arabella , daughters Mary and Elizabeth, and son the 4th Duke are to be seen in the Sackville Chapel at Withyham.

JOHN FREDERICK SACKVILLE

3RD DUKE OF DORSET

BORN: 1745 SUCCEEDED: 1769 DIED: 1799

COLONEL CHRISTIAN BARON VON OMPTEDA
BRIGADE COMMANDER - FOUR K.G.L. BATTALIONS
BATTLE OF WATERLOO - 1815
BORN: 1765 DIED: 1815

COLONEL BARON VON OMPTEDA

1765 - 1815

BRIGADE COMMANDER
FOUR LINE BATTALIONS OF THE K.G.L.

Christian F. William von Ompteda of noble Frisian descent, was born near Bremerhaven on the 26th November, 1765.

Christian's entry into the Royal Corps of Pages at Hanover in 1777 saw the start of his military career. In 1781 he was appointed an Ensign in the Foot Guards. In 1793, he was promoted to Captain and Adjutant succeeding his friend Charles von Alten.

On disbandment of the Hanoverian Army in July 1803, following the Convention of Artlenburg, Ompteda joined von Alten in England in the October to reconstitute Hanoverian forces here. On the 5th November 1803, Ompteda's former Foot Guards became the 1st Line Battalion of the King's German Legion (K.G.L.) commanded by Colonel von Langwerth with Captain von Ompteda as second-in-command. Hilsea Barracks near Portsmouth was used to establish the new Battalion/s until the summer of 1804.

In the August, the newly formed units moved to Bexhill which became a KGL Infantry Depot for some 5,000 men. Captain Ompteda tells us in his diary *"The people at this place generally seem to look at us much as we do on Cossacks . . . The gentry around called at the camp. They seem to be beginning to discover we are not quite outlandish bears".*

Violent storms in October 1804 flooded the camp and delayed hut-building. Bad conditions and ill-health necessitated Captain Ompteda seeking quarters at Woodgate Farm owned by the Lansdale family. On the 31st December, 1804, he was promoted to Lt.Colonel and Commander of the 1st Line Battalion.

In November, 1805, the 1st Line Battalion was part of the Expeditionary Force which sailed from Ramsgate in an attempt to thwart Napoleon's "Grand Design". Napoleon's success at Austerlitz on the 2nd December put paid to the attempt. On the 18th February, 1806, back again in England, the Battalion was ordered to proceed to Kinsale Barracks, south of Cork, where it was "quartered" till June 1806 when it moved to Gibraltar where it was stationed until June 1807.

Ompteda's informative letters to his brother, Louis, and the Battalion Journal, tell us that between 1807 and 1814, he saw service in Denmark, Holland and the Iberian Peninsula; that he was given leave of absence having suffered a mental breakdown but was reinstated as commander of the 1st Light Battalion on the 3rd November, 1812, to lead it on the victorious Expedition through Spain. In 1814, he was back in Bexhill.

In September 1814, he was serving in the Netherlands under the command of the Hereditary Prince of Orange. When Napoleon escaped from Elba, the Legion (about to be reconstituted as part of the Hanoverian Army) offered its services for a further six months. Re-formed units joined the Third Division under Lt.General Charles von Alten, as part of the Army Corps of the Prince of Orange. Ompteda was given command of the 2nd Brigade consisting of the 1st Light Battalion (under Lt.Col. Louis von dem Bussche), the 2nd Light (under Major Baring), 5th Line (Lt.Col. von Linsingen) and 8th Line Battalion (under Lt.Col. von Schroder).

Col. Ompteda was killed at Waterloo on the 18th June, 1815, in carrying out an ill-considered order of the Prince of Orange. Major Baring was wounded in the heroic defence of the La Haye Sainte Farm position - he attained the rank of Major-General in the newly formed Hanoverian Army.

Lt.Col. von Schroder died from wounds at Waterloo.
Lt. General Charles von Alten and Major General Colin Hackett were severely wounded - both received the K.C.B.

MAJOR GEORGE BARING

COMMANDER 2ND LIGHT BATTALION
KING'S GERMAN LEGION
BATTLE OF WATERLOO 1815

WILLIAM PITT AMHERST

1773 - 1857

1ST EARL OF ARAKAN

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA 1823 -1828

WILLIAM PITT AMHERST

1773 - 1857

1ST EARL OF ARAKAN

William Pitt Amherst, son of brother of Jeffrey 1st Baron Amherst (C-in-C North America in Seven Years War and C-in-C British Army 1772-1796) was born in Bath in 1773.

He succeeded to the barony and Riverhead estate of his uncle in 1797. He married in 1800 Sarah Dowager Countess of Plymouth.

Renowned for his refusal to kow-tow to the Chinese Emperor in 1816. He was Governor-General of India from 1823 to 1828. His son, Jeffrey died in India from "epidemic fever" aged 23. Lord Amherst's career survived near catastrophic mutiny of sepoys in the Burmese War – a war concluded by the acquisition of Assam and Arakan. Lord Amherst in recognition of success was created 1st Earl of Arakan.

Lord Amherst's first wife died in 1838. the following year, he married the widow of his stepson - another Dowager Countess of Plymouth - née Mary Sackville, the elder daughter of John Frederick Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset. Mary's sister, Elizabeth Sackville had married in 1813 George West, 5th Earl De La Warr. The two sisters became co-heiresses of the Sackville estates on the death of their unmarried brother, the 4th Duke. And so, the two marriages can be said to have determined the future history of Bexhill.

Amherst Road junctions with Buckhurst Road in Bexhill.

Earl Amherst died in 1857. Mary Countess Amherst (née Mary Sackville) predeceased her sister. And so, both the Buckhurst and Bexhill estates passed to Elizabeth, and thence to the De La Warrs who (until the succession of the 7th Earl in 1873) adopted the use of combined family names of Sackville-West

GEORGE GILHAM

1773 - 1831

LEADER - LITTLE COMMON SMUGGLERS

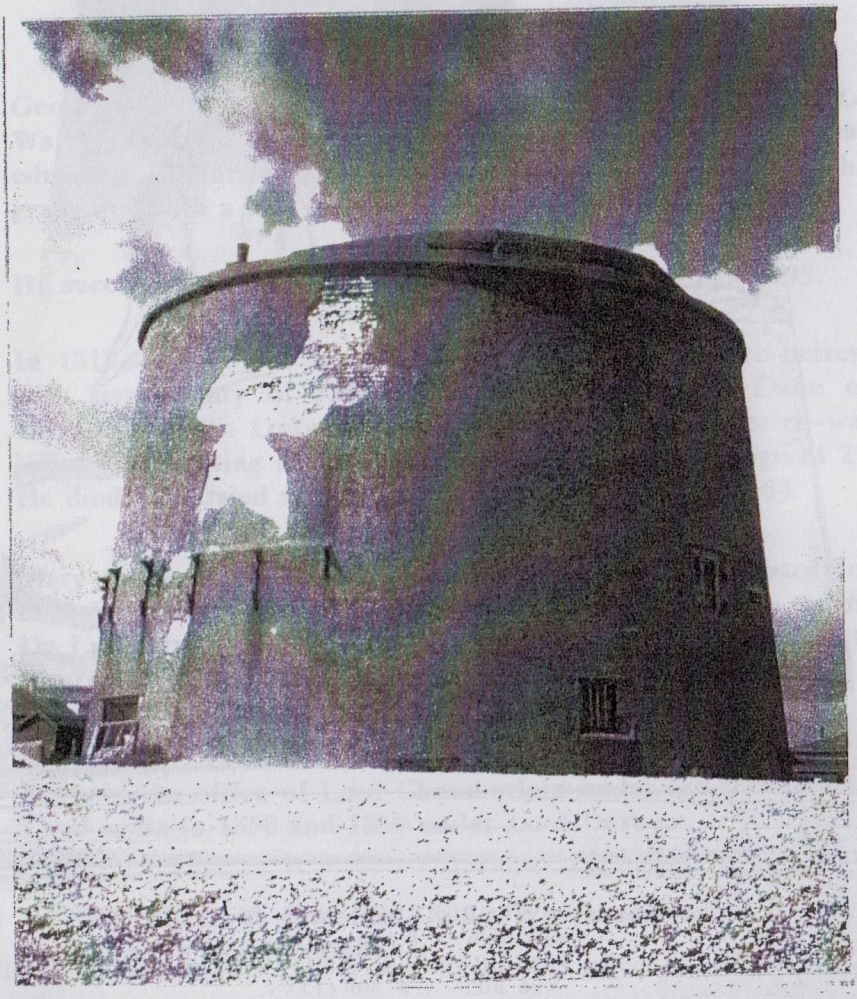
Thomas Gilham moved to Little Common from Marden in Kent in the second half of the 18th century and married Elizabeth Smith in 1768 at St.Peter's Church in the Old Town.

Later generations of the Gilhams were builders by day and smugglers by night. George Gilham (1773 - 1831) was Leader of the Little Common Gang which operated from the beach at the Sluice near the Star Inn at Normans Bay. The gang operated two boats - the "Long Boat" and "Princess Charlotte".

In February 1822, Customs men prevented the "Charlotte" from landing. Gangs were protected by Batsmen who carried heavy wooden bats some two yards in length - 300 had gathered in front of the Star Inn but were forced to retreat before a superior force of Customs men.

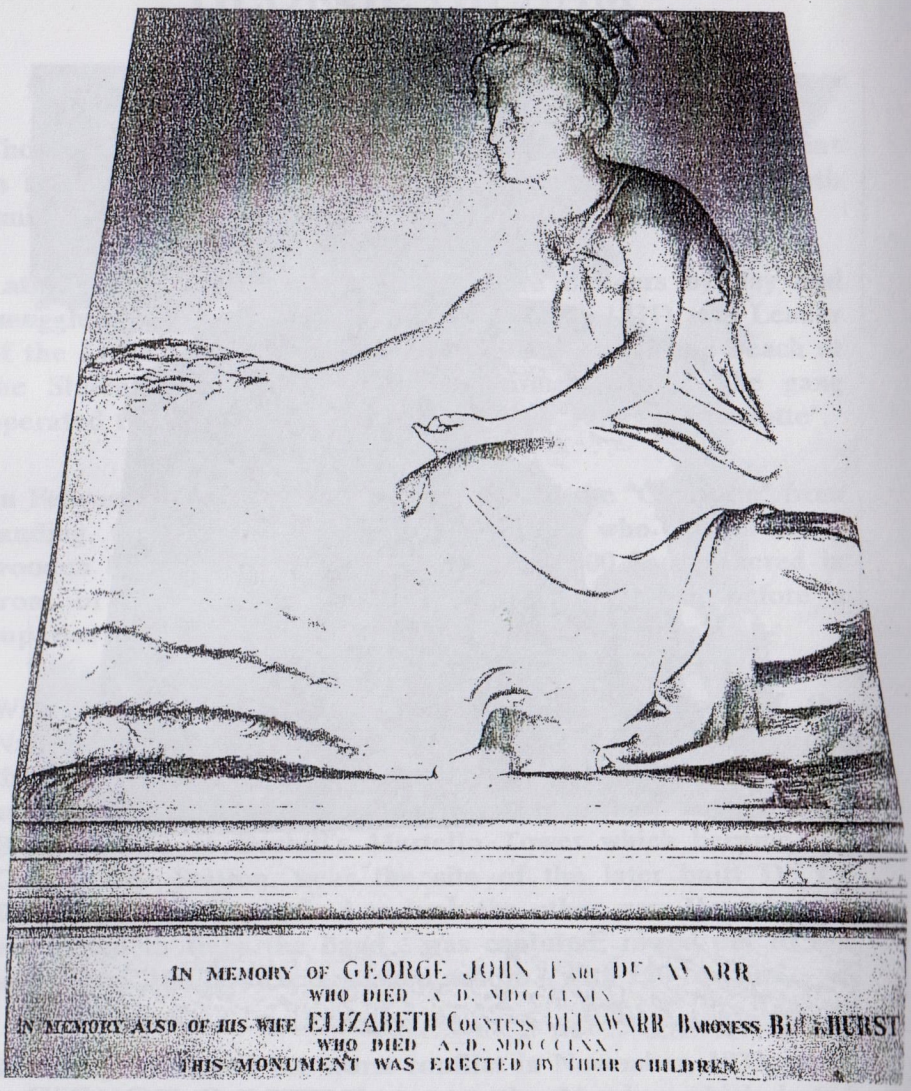
With the serious threat of invasion at the time of the Napoleonic wars, a series of Martello Towers were built along the coast. These were manned by Blockademen which meant added problems for smugglers. It is said that, in 1819, the Blockademan at Bexhill's Martello Tower which became the Coastguards Station, near the site of the later built De La Warr Pavilion, was bribed to look the other way. However, he attempted to sieze the band , was captured, rowed out to sea and killed. His body was washed ashore - with £50 on him..

Pevensey witnessed the worst conflict in November, 1833, when there was a running battle across the Marshes which lasted over two hours. Three men were killed and five taken prisoner - none of the Blockademen were injured. When use of firearms became general practice, the Little Common gang disbanded.



NORMANS BAY MARTELLO TOWER

One of the remaining 43 (of 103) towers of the coastal chain erected in 19th c. as defence against potential Napoleonic invasion - then, manned by Blockademen, used to combat smuggling and the Little Common Gang led by George Gilham (1773-1823)


IN MEMORY OF GEORGE JOHN
WHO DIED
IN MEMORY ALSO OF HIS WIFE ELIZABETH
WHO DIED
THIS MONUMENT WAS ERECTED BY THEIR CHILDREN

5TH EARL DE LA WARR

GEORGE JOHN SACKVILLE-WEST

BORN: 1791 SUCCEEDED: 1795 DIED: 1869

Memorial to 5th Earl & Countess De La Warr
in Sackville Chapel, Church of St.Michael & All Angels at Withyham

GEORGE JOHN SACKVILLE-WEST

1791 - s.1795 - 1869

5TH EARL DE LA WARR

George John West, son of John Richard West (4th Earl De La Warr) was born in London on 26th October, 1791. He was educated at Harrow and Brasenose College Oxford where he graduated with a B.A. degree in 1812 and a Masters in 1819.

He succeeded to the title on the death of his father in 1795.

In 1813, he married Lady Elizabeth, daughter and co-heiress with sister Mary of John Frederick Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset. The 4th Duke , George – son of John Frederick–was killed in a hunting accident in Ireland in 1815 at the age of 21. He died unmarried as did the 5th Duke, a cousin, in 1864.

Mary predeceased her sister and so the Manors (estates) of both Bexhill and Buckhurst passed to Elizabeth and so to the De La Warrs. Following the marriage of Elizabeth Sackville to George West, the family name became Sackville-West.

In 1841, the 5th Earl De La Warr was made a Privy Councillor. He held the office of Lord Chamberlain under Sir Robert Peel - and again in 1858 and 1859 under Lord Derby.

In 1864, Elizabeth Countess De La Warr was created Baroness Buckhurst in her own right.

The 5th Earl De La Warr died at Buckhurst Park on the 23rd February, 1869. His eldest son had died unmarried in 1850 and so he was succeeded by his second son Charles Richard.

Elizabeth, Dowager Countess De La Warr, Baroness Buckhurst, died on the 9th January, 1870.

THOMAS BRASSEY
(1805 - 1870)
FAMOUS RAILWAY BUILDER

Thomas Brassey was born 7th November, 1805, at Buerton Aldford, in Cheshire. On leaving Chester Grammar School., he became articled to a Mr.Lawton, Land Surveyor and Agent.

He married in 1831 Maria Farrington, second daughter of Joseph Harrison of Birkenhead. They had three sons - all became Members of Parliament - the eldest created an Earl.

He was persuaded by George Stephenson "to enter" the railway building business and became one of the most successful railway builders. His first undertaking was the Penkridge Viaduct in 1834 at the age of 29. It is said that he built one third of the mileage in Britain and one-twentieth of the world's mileage. Mentioned here are just a few of his achievements : the Lancaster to Carlisle section over Shap Fell linking London to Edinburgh - this involved blasting 250.000 cubic yards of rock; the famous Barentin Viaduct (12 miles outside Rouen); the Victoria Bridge over the River St. Lawrence; railways in France, Italy, India,the Crimea, Australia, the Argentine, etc.

The Digswell Viaduct near Welwyn stands to this day. He refused to stand for Parliament and shunned honours. He was highly regarded by a worldwide work force of 100,000 men. He accumulated a fortune of £5 million never limiting his liability.

The health-giving benefits of Hastings and St.Leonards, providing easy access to his Continental work, attracted him in his later years. He purchased the estate of Sir Peregrine Acland at Catsfield in 1865 and built there Normanhurst Court which became the home of his eldest son. He died at the Royal Victoria Hotel in St.Leonards on the 8th December, 1870, and was buried in a simple tomb in the cemetery of the Church of St.Laurence at Catsfield.

THOMAS BRASSEY

WORLDWIDE RAILWAY CONTRACTOR

BORN BUERTON-ALDFORD:1805 DIED ST.LEONARDS:1870

ARTHUR SAWYER BROOK

LAND-OWNING FARMER

BORN BEXHILL: 1810 DIED; 1890

ARTHUR S. BROOK

(1810 - 1890)

LAND-OWNING LOCAL FARMER

The Brook family moved to Bexhill from west Sussex in the 1750s. Arthur Sawyer Brook's grandfather built Brook House (now renamed "The Grange") located in the Old Town at the top of Sea Road. By 1755, he was farming some 278 acres at Court Lodge (name at this time of the Manor House).

Arthur's father, born in 1766, was the youngest of eleven children. He married Jane Russell, daughter of William Russell of Barrack Hall. He purchased Church Farm and farmed it with land attached to Court Lodge and Brook House.

His son, Arthur Sawyer, born in 1810, familiarly known as Squire Brook, farmed land as far as Cooden. All common land was under his control – he acted as bailiff for the Manor of Bexhill. For a period, the family lived at the Manor House.

Arthur S. Brook was Master of the renowned Old Bexhill Harriers for more than 50 years. Meets of the Harriers were attended by first Princess Victoria (prior to her accession to the throne) and then by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII). Squire Brook was a great cricket enthusiast.

On Squire Brook's death in 1890, his son Arthur John inherited the Brook estates.

MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES SACKVILLE- WEST

1815 - s.1869 - 1873

6TH EARL DE LA WARR

Charles Richard Sackville-West, the second son of George John West, 5th Earl De La Warr, and Elizabeth, daughter of John Frederick Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset, was born in London on the 15th November, 1815.

In 1833, Charles Richard secured a commission as an Ensign in the 43rd Foot. In 1835, he was promoted to Lieutenant in the 15th Foot and, in 1842, promoted to Captain in the 21st Foot.

In 1845 and 1846, he served as ADC and military secretary to Sir Hugh Gough C-in-C (afterwards Viscount Gough) in the 1st Sikh War. He was mentioned in despatches several times. In 1846, he received the brevet rank of Major, and in 1847 the Indian Medal with three clasps. In 1850, he attained the brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

In 1854, he was promoted to Colonel and posted to the Crimea In 1855, he received the Crimea Medal with four clasps and was made a C.B. In 1856, he was given the local rank of Major-General and received the Legion of Honour. On the 29th October, 1864, he was confirmed Major-General.

He succeeded his father as 6th Earl De La Warr on the 24th February,1869. On the 20th May 1871, he was made a K.C.B.

He committed suicide at Cambridge on the 22nd April, 1873. Unmarried, he was succeeded by his brother, Reginald Windsor Sackville-West who on becoming 7th Earl De La Warr arranged by Royal License to drop West from the family name.

6TH EARL DE LA WARR

MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES-SACKVILLE

SIKH & CRIMEA WARS

BORN: 1815 SUCCEEDED: 1869 DIED: 1873

BARRACK ROAD MEMORIAL GARDENS
THE KING'S GERMAN LEGION
1804-1815
This former 19th century burial ground was originally the cemetery of the Bexhill Barracks situated in this area circa 1798-1820.
In the recess adjoining Holliers Hill, rest several hundred soldiers of the British Army including over 150 personnel of King George III's King's German Legion.
Diese ehemalige Begräbnisstätte aus den neunzehnten Jahrhundert war ursprünglich der Soldatenfriedhof der Bexhiller Garnison von etwa 1798 *bis* 1820.
Etwas zurückgesetzt von Holliers Hill ruhen mehrere hundert Soldaten der britischen Armee, einschliesslich von 150 Angehörigen der königlich deutschen Legion Georg des Dritten.

Mr. Samuel Scrivens was buried in 1898 (as his wife 21 years earlier) in the onetime Bexhill Cemetery located in Barrack Road.
The cemetery was the burial ground of soldiers of the King's German Legion (George III) who occupied Bexhill Barracks from 1804 until 1815.

Re-enactment Groups of the King's German Legion attended the unveiling of the Memorial Plaque by Lady Longford on St.George's Day, 23rd April 1994, and sounded the Last Post.

SAMUEL SCRIVENS

1816 - 1898

LANDOWNER

The Scrivens moved in 1843 from their London home at Clapham to occupy the Millfield mansion (formerly the Firs) in Bexhill which had been built in the 1820s by Josiah Routledge.

The Millfield mansion passed to the Moorman family and then through marriage to Samuel Scrivens. Pleasantly located with rear outlook on to an attactive "green", it has in more recent years been converted into Flats.

Samuel Scrivens was considered to be the second largest landowner in the district. He was a familiar and popular figure - always ready to give good advice and help in case of need when sought..

Persuaded to stand, he was elected to the Local Board in 1884.

He died in 1898 and was buried as his wife (who pre-deceased him by 21 years) in Barrack Road Cemetery.

REGINALD WINDSOR SACKVILLE

1817 - s.1873 - 1896

7TH EARL DE LA WARR

Reginald Windsor Sackville, third son of the 5th Earl and Elizabeth, daughter of the 3rd Duke of Dorset, was born in London on the 21st February, 1817. Educated Balliol College, Oxford (B.A. 1838 & M.A. 1840), he entered the church. He was Rector of Withyham from 1841 to 1865 and Chaplain to Queen Victoria from 1846 to 1865. He succeeded to the title as 7th Earl on the death of his brother in 1873 and arranged by Royal License to drop West from the family name.

On the 7th May, 1867, he married Constance Mary Elizabeth, daughter of Alexander Dundas Cochrane-Baillie, 1st Lord Lamington. They had two sons - the elder, Lionel Charles Cranfield Sackville born 1868, married on 24th June, 1890, Dorothy Postle Heseltine. Lionel drowned, without issue, aged only 22, when his yacht "Urania" foundered in a bad storm. The second son, Gilbert George Reginald Sackville, in consequence, took the "courtesy" title of Viscount Cantelupe with right of succession.

The 7th Earl advanced Bexhill development by engaging the services of John William Webb, a south London builder. Further information is given under "John W. Webb" – page 57. The aim of the 7th Earl (followed by his son, Gilbert) was to make Bexhill an exclusive resort. Nearly all seafront hotels were built within 12 years on De La Warr property.

The Sackville, a one-time leading south coast hotel, was an enterprise of the 7th Earl and opened by him on the 23rd July, 1890. Advertised in "The Times Of India" - it attracted distinguished guests including, it is said, Lord Curzon.

The 7th Earl died on the 15th January, 1896 and was succeeded by his second son, Gilbert George Reginald.

7TH EARL DE LA WARR

REGINALD WINDSOR SACKVILLE

BORN: 1817 SUCCEEDED: 1873 DIED: 1896

Warrior Square at adjacent St.Leonards-on-Sea

QUEEN EMPRESS VICTORIA

BORN: 1819 SUCCEEDED: 1837 · DIED: 1901

(Godmother to Prince Victor, youngest son of Nripendra Narayan Maharajah of Cooch Behar)

VICTORIA - QUEEN OF BRITAIN

1819 - s.1837 - 1901

EMPRESS OF INDIA

Alexandrina Victoria, daughter of Edward Duke of Kent and Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfield, was born 24th May, 1819. She succeeded to the throne, in 1837, on the death of her uncle William IV, and crowned on the 28thJune 1838. She married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha on the 10th February, 1840 - they had 9 children. Albert died in 1861 and from that date Queen Victoria wore black until her death on the 22nd January, 1901.

At the start of her reign, Queen Victoria ruled a small but growing Empire. By the end of her reign, Canada and Australia were Independent Dominions, New Zealand was on its way to Independence, India was under British Rule, South Africa was soon to unite as an independent nation under the Crown, and large parts of Africa and Far East were under British control.

In 1834, Princess Victoria visited East Sussex. She stayed with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, at the distinctively pillared seafront house of James Burton in St.Leonards-on-Sea (No 57 Marina - now named Crown House). During her stay she joined a Meet of the Bexhill Harriers and rode with them over the marshes. As a memento of the occasion, she presented a silver hunting horn to Mr.Arthur Sawyer Brook.

On the 22nd June, 1887, Queen Victoria celebrated the Golden Jubilee of her accession. This was marked in Bexhill - by the opening of the Victoria Hall, and the Institute and Reading Room in Station Road later to become a Church Army Centre and since 1965 part of a Youth Centre. To commemorate, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, the Congregational Church, adjacent to the Victoria Hall, was consecrated.

JOHN LAMBERT WALKER

1821 -1903

CITY BUSINESS MAN

John Lambert Walker was born in London in 1821. He left school at the age of 15 and through personal endeavour became a successful and well travelled City business man. His wife died young leaving seven children.

He purchased the Woodsgate Park estate in 1874 and moved to Bexhill the following year. His Census Return six years later indicated he farmed some 150 acres. Over the years, he became the owner of considerable Old Town property.

Extremely public spirited - his many benevolent actions were undertaken with complete lack of ostentation. He was largely responsible for bringing into existence the much needed Local Board of Health. He was unanimously voted a member in 1893.

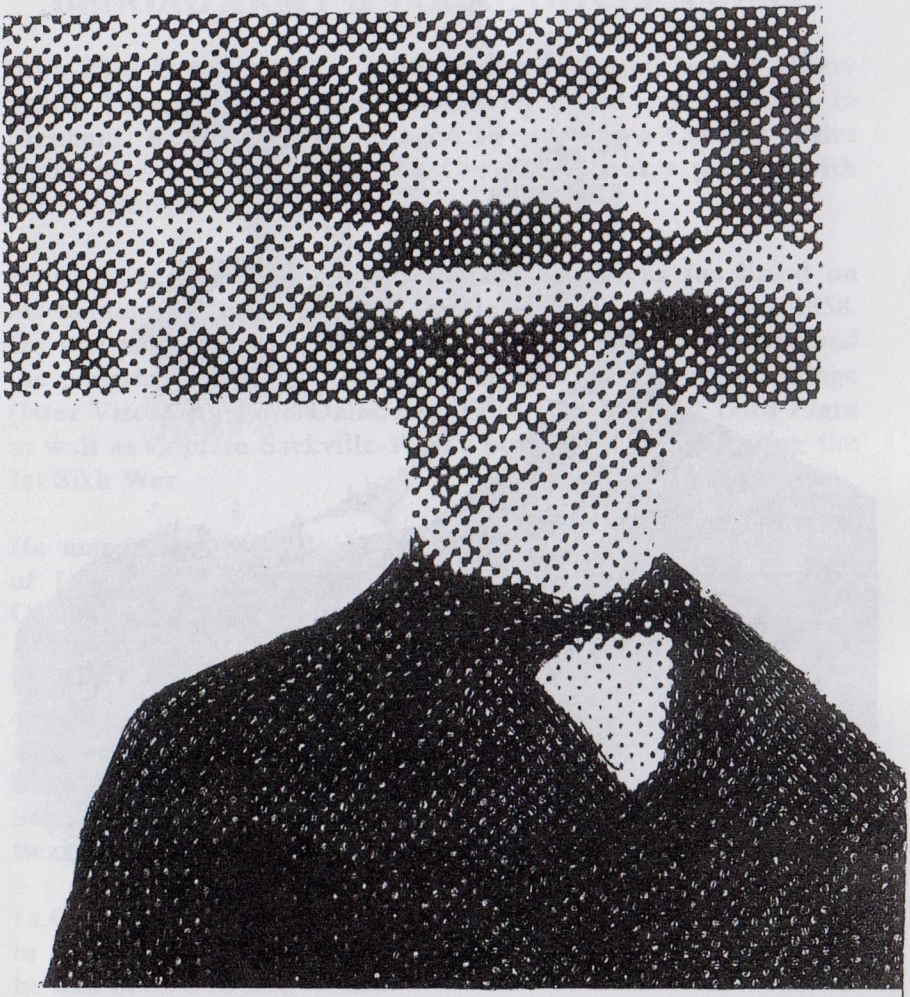
He donated part of his wealth to the building of St. Stephen's Church. The foundation stone, laid on the 15th October,1898, contains a scroll of dedication with the following words:

"As a humble mark of gratitude for
His continuous mercy throughout my long life".

The words speak volumes - he was extremely modest over his gift - shunning all publicity.

John Lambert Walker died at his Woodsgate home in 1903 at the age of 82 within sound of the tolling bell of St.Stephen's Church which stands not only as a monument to his piety and generosity and but also as a memorial to one, born in other parts, who had closely associated himself with the town by good works for 27 years. He attributed his success to perseverance as expressed by the maxim:

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again".



JOHN LAMBERT WALKER
Founder St.Stephen's Church, Bexhill.
Born London 1821. Died Bexhill 1903

LT. COLONEL HENRY LANE

LATE 5TH BENGAL LIGHT CAVALRY

SUTLEJ CAMPAIGN 1845 PUNJAB CAMPAIGN 1848

RELIEF OF LUCKNOW 1857/8

BORN: 1827 DIED: 1895

LT. COL. HENRY LANE

1827 - 1895

BENGAL ARMY & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Born 23rd October,1827, at Ghazepore in India, son of Henry Snaith Lane of the Bengal Civil Service. Educated school in Clapham Returned to India aged 16 years as a Cavalry Cadet in the service of the East India Company. Took a posting with the 5th Bengal Light Cavalry.

Henry Lane served in all the Indian Campaigns (as listed on his monument in Town Hall Square) between 1845 and 1858. He was present at the Relief of Lucknow. His service covered the periods of office of Governors-General Sir Henry Hardinge (later Viscount), Lord Dalhousie, Lord Canning and Lord Elgin as well as Captain Sackville-West's period of service during the 1st Sikh War.

He married in 1849 Helen Henrietta Alexander, 3rd daughter of Lt.Col. William Alexander C.B. of the 5th Bengal Light Cavalry. They had 4 sons and 4 daughters.

He retired in 1865 at the age of 38, having achieved the rank of Lt.Colonel, on the death of his father who was killed in a road accident at Ninfield. He took up residence at the family home at Broadoak Manor (later occupied by the Beehive School - now exists no more) and served the community of Bexhill for the next 30 years.

Lt.Col. Henry Lane died on the 1st April, 1895 and was buried in the Cemetery of St. Mark's Church at Little Common where he had been a churchwarden.

The Memorial in Town Hall Square, erected to his honour on the 25th June 1896, it was unveiled by his widow with the 8th Earl De La Warr and Lord Brassey in attendance.

THOMAS BRASSEY

1836 - 1918

1ST EARL BRASSEY OF NORMANHURST

Thomas Brassey, eldest son of Thomas Brassey, the railway builder, was born at Stafford on the 11th February, 1836. Educated at Rugby School and University College, Oxford (History–Honours degree). He married firstly Anna Allnutt on the 9th October, 1860. They had one son and four daughters - Constance Alberta died at the age of 5 years from scarlet fever. They lived at Beauport Park until Normanhurst Court (being built by his father) was ready in 1870 for occupation.

Thomas Brassey was Liberal M.P. for Hastings from 1868 to 1885; Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1880 – 1884; K.C.B. 1881; created a Baron 1886; Governor of Victoria (Australia) from 1895 to 1900 ; Mayor of Bexhill 1907/8.

His first wife, Anna, was author of several 'travel' books – "The Voyage in the Sunbeam" was translated into several languages. She died en route from Australia to Mauritius and was buried at sea on the 14th September 1887.

Lord Brassey's son, Thomas Allnutt married Lady Idina, daughter of the Marquess of Abergavenny; his eldest daughter, Mabelle Annie married Charles Augustus Egerton of Robertsbridge; his second daughter, Muriel Agnes married Lord Cantelupe – later 8th Earl De La Warr (divorced 1902); Marie Adelaide married Freeman Freeman-Thomas (Liberal M.P. for Hastings - then created Baron, Viscount, Earl and Viceroy - and finally Marquis).

Lord Brassey married secondly in 1890 Sybil De Vere - issue daughter Hon. Helen de Vere Brassey. He was created 1st Earl Brassey of Normanhurst in King George V's 1911 Coronation Honours List. He died on the 23rd February, 1918. and was buried in the St.Laurence Church Cemetery at Catsfield.

1ST EARL BRASSEY OF NORMANHURST
THOMAS BRASSEY
MAYOR OF BEXHILL 1907/8 AS 1ST BARON BRASSEY
BORN STAFFORD: 1836 DIED: 1918

JOHN WEBB

BUILDER & DEVELOPER OF BEXHILL

BORN; 1840 DIED: 1922

JOHN WILLIAM WEBB

1840 - 1922

"MAKER OF BEXHILL"

A builder by trade - John William Webb owned a thriving business at Brockley in South London. His connection with the town lasted some 40 years. As the caption to his Obituary indicated, he was for the greater part "the maker of Bexhill" as exists today.

His first important work here in Bexhill was the construction of the vital sea wall in 1833 from Galley Hill to Sea Road fronting the De La Warr estate to the east of the town which the 7th Earl saw as essential if the town was to be developed as the "exclusive" resort envisaged.

In a financial/land in part payment agreement, Webb built the western parade, created Egerton Park, and adjacent residential areas as Wickham Road, etc., and in part, with the passage of time, housing through to Cooden.

As seen today, contrary to the intentions of the Earls De La Warr of those times, the town developed to the west more than to the east.

As highlighted by the funeral 'orations' at St. Mark's Church, Little Common - John William Webb was a pioneer who had the interests of the town at heart. He was a man of the people, bluff and curt in conversation, who never used his position on the Council to advance his own private interests.

Whilst acknowledged by all as a shrewd business man, he gave generously to those in need. As stated by Mr.G.H. Gray (Earl De La Warr's Agent) in his oration "He steadfastly believed in the future of the town."

He died aged 82 years on the 11th November,1922.

EDWARD VII

1841 - s.1901 - 1910

KING EMPEROR

Edward, eldest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, was born at St. James's Palace on the 9th November, 1841.

He married Princess Alexandra, elder daughter of King Christian IX of Denmark in 1863. Their relationship was known as "affectionate" - they had six children.

Edward's relationship with his mother was strained - she excluded him from domestic political duties and so he occupied his time "socializing" much to her consternation.

He succeeded in 1901 and was crowned in Westminster Abbey on the 9th August 1902. His love of travel and ceremonial pioneered an ambassadorial style of monarchy.

Edward, as Prince of Wales, made two known visits to Bexhill. Accompanied by Princess Alexandra, he attended a meet in 1864 at Sidley Green of the Sussex Foxhounds which was under the Mastership of Mr. H.M.Curteis of Windmill Hill. Two days later, he was at Bexhill for a meet of the Harriers under the Mastership of Mr. Brook. Both visits were made whilst the Prince and Princess were staying in St. Leonards. It would be surprising if further "private" visits were not made since his second son (later King George V) was married to Princess Mary of Teck whose mother had been the guest of Lord Cantelupe (later 8th Earl De La Warr) at the Manor House on more than one occasion.

This was an era when the Sackville Hotel (opened in 1890) was a rendez-vous of social importance - recognised, in part, by the town being granted the status of an incorporated borough by Edward VII on the 7th April 1902.

Edward VII died at Buckingham Palace on the 6th May, 1910.

EDWARD VII

KING EMPEROR

BORN: 1841 SUCCEEDED: 1901 DIED: 1910

On the 19th April, 1899, the 8th Earl De La Warr presided at the first meeting to consider the possibilities of Bexhill making application to receive Incorporation status.. The importance of Bexhill of those days was fully and ably presented to the Local Board of Inquiry on the 13th and 14th December, 1901.

The issuance of a Charter was approved on the 24th March with Wednesday, 21st May, 1902, established as the date for its reception by members of Bexhill's Urban Council .

The 21st May, 1902, was a fine day. A delegation of Bexhill Urban Councillors with Mr.R.H. Gaby, solicitor to the Bexhill Incorporation General Comittee left Bexhill by the 8.44. a.m. train for London Bridge to collect the Charter from the agents of Mr.Gaby in Grays Inn. Having done so, the delegation returned to Bexhill by the 11.56. am. train from Victoria.

The document itself was not over-richly impressive. It was engrossed on the first page with the following:

The Borough of Bexhill
In the County of Sussex
Charter of Incorporation Granted by
His Majesty King Edward VII
on the 7th day of April 1902

The document bore a £30 stamp and the date April 11th 1902.

Earl De La Warr as Provisional Mayor and Mr.Sholto Douglas as Acting Town Clerk received the returning delegation at Bexhill station and drove to the Town Hall where a large crowd was gathered among which were the Mayors of Hastings, Eastbourne and Lewes. About 2.20. p.m. Earl De La Warr handed the Charter to the Acting Town Clerk for him to read in full to all present. The National Anthem followed

The Mayor of Hastings was the first to congratulate the town on its achievement drawing attention to the fact that in 1884, the town had a population of 2,500 which on the day of achieving its Charter of Incorporation had reached 12,000 whereas Hastings had grown from 12,000 to 70,000.

R OF INCORPORATION

As we celebrated the centenary of the granting of a Borough Charter to Bexhill in the year 2002, it is interesting to note that the population of Bexhill today is in excess of 40,000 and Hastings 75,000. The Mayor, Alderman F.A. Langham wished the town "a successful future and that it might live as a Corporation as many centuries as Hastings has up to now".

The Mayor of Lewes, Alderman Major Gates, then congratulated the town on its reception of the Charter expressing his wonder at its achievements and progress.

The Mayor of Eastbourne, Alderman N. Strange, representing a newer municipality, congratulated Bexhill on its achievement of being a Coronation Borough and drew attention to the responsibilities such a status involved – in saying that every Burgess should exercise the vote placed in their hands by using it to choose those who will govern best and not decide by which party a man belongs to or let politics enter into municipal life - then you will get the best on both sides to occupy the responsible positions.

Lord De La Warr called upon Councillor W.J. Smith (Leader of Bexhill Urban Council) who spoke quite emotionally.

"These rejoicings and this occasion make me think of a great many of the old faces that are no longer with us". Several as italicized are profiled herein. "They make me think of your first Chairman *Col. Henry Lane, Mr. Arthur Brook, the old squire of Bexhill,* Mr.S. Poulton, *Mr.S. Scrivens*, and Mr.C. Gold."

"Such old Bexhillians and the thought of their having gone makes me serious. I think, however, that if you look back at the past you will find that we kept the Town going in a prosperous manner. Ladies and Gentlemen, I can only say in conclusion; send good men to govern you; send men who will go straight; men who will have no axe to grind, and men who will look after your interests, and then the town will continue to prosper." Sentiments which I am sure we all agree equally apply now as then - a hundred years ago.

EBENEZER HOWARD
FIRST MAYOR OF BEXHILL 1902/3

EBENEZER HOWARD

INAUGURATOR OF ONE-TIME CRICKET FESTIVAL
FIRST MAYOR OF BEXHILL 1902/3

Although Gilbert George Sackville, 8th Earl De La Warr, had been named as provisional Mayor in the draft Charter of Incorporation (granted by King Edward VII to Bexhill on the 7th April, 1902), he did not in fact become the first Mayor of the Borough and did not, for that matter, offer himself as a candidate for that office.

Actually, the town did not even have a prospective candidate until just a few days before the 9th November - the established date given to mayor-making for nearly all boroughs at that time. A deputation of the just elected Town Council went to London and invited Mr.Ebenezer Howard, who had inherited the Birchington estate but never taken part in public life, to accept the office. His acceptance provided the town with a distinguished mayoralty.

Mr.Howard's residence was at Birchington House in Collington. On his estate were to be found the well-known Seafield School (moved to Collington from Hastings Road), Effingham House School (moved from Folkestone in 1908) and St.Wilfred's School (badly damaged by fire in 1925 - thereafter to become Falconbury) - all Independent Schools of reputable note.

Mr.Howard was well-known for the cricket festival held annually on his estate - it was a festival noted for the production of some prodigious scores. On one occasion as many as 1,100 runs were achieved in a two day match. On another one team achieved 600 runs for 6 wickets declared with one player scoring 239 runs not out.

EBENEZER WARBURTON

(1845 - 1929)

MILLER & MERCHANT

Ebenezer Warburton, founder of Bexhill's longest surviving business, was born in 1845 in the county of Bedfordshire. Apprenticed to Mr. Heaver of Hempstead Mill near Uckfield, he married in 1870 the miller's daughter, Harriet. They had eight sons (two died in infancy) and three daughters. Ebenezer ran the Hempstead Mill and also Uckfield Mill , purchased in the year of his marriage. In 1887, Ebenezer purchased the old Corn Stores at Belle Hill in expanding Bexhill and then, in 1910, the currently still used retail premises in Station Road.

When the large National Millers started to market their own proprietary brands, the Hempstead Mill closed and Ebenezer's son, George, was left to operate and manage the Uckfield Mill.

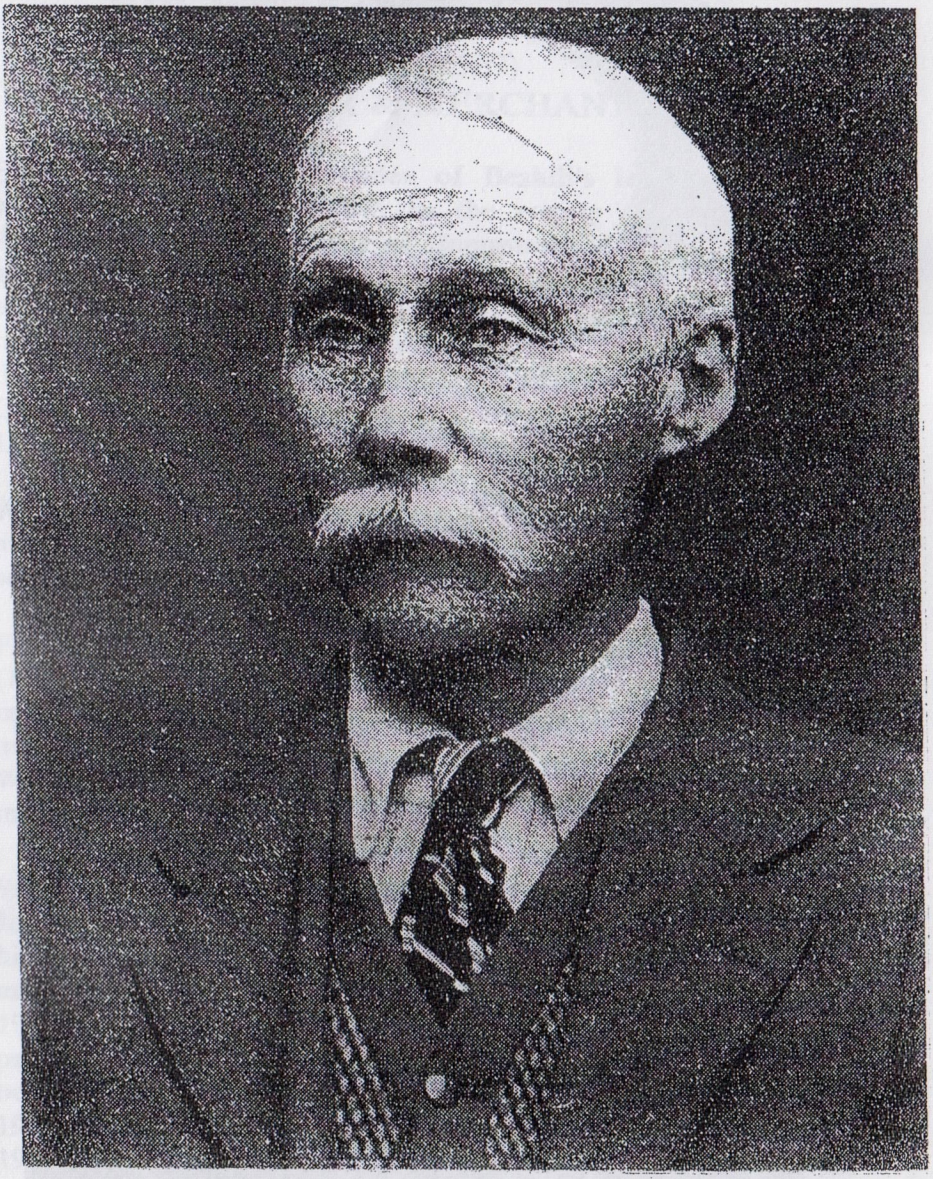
Following Ebenezer's retirement, his three sons Ebenezer (Junior), William and Harold continued the Bexhill businesses in partnership - the latter being responsible for the management of the retail side at Station Road. In 1935, William's son, Ken joined the business. As feeding-stuffs trade increased after the war, the coal and coke sale side was sold.

With the disposal of the Uckfield Mill in 1950, George's son, John came to Bexhill and ran the business in partnership with his uncle, William, and cousins Lois and Ken. In 1964, William and Lois retired, leaving John and Ken to run the business. In 1970, Ken's son, David, joined the firm. In 1975, the Belle Hill premises closed down to make way for King Offa Way. David became Station Road Shop Manager and when John retired in 1980 joined his father in partnership. On Ken's retirement in 1984, David (great grandson of the founder) took over the business as sole proprietor since when the firm has seen the extension of the Station road premises.

EBENEZER WARBURTON

MILLER & MERCHANT

BORN: 1845 DIED: 1929



ALBERT GOODWIN (R.W.S.)

RENOWNED WATERCOLOUR ARTIST

BORN: 1845 DIED: 1932

ALBERT GOODWIN

1845 - 1932

RENOWNED WATERCOLOUR ARTIST

Albert Goodwin lived in Bexhill for the last 25 years of his life – he resided at "Ellerslie", Ellerslie Lane from 1907 until his death in 1932. It may be of interest to mention here, in this connection, that his son settled in Ellerslie, New Zealand.

Albert Goodwin was born in 1845 in Maidstone, Kent - he was one of a large family consisting of nine brothers and sisters.

He studied under the guiding hands of Pre-Raphaelite artists Arthur Hughes and Ford Madox Brown. John Ruskin, the Victorian intellectual, was his great friend.

He was widely travelled - not only through the length and breadth of Sussex sketching subjects and scenes for his studio painted watercolours but also other parts of the country, through Europe and later more distant countries as Africa, India, the West Indies and New Zealand.

He was a prolific artist and exhibited his works at the Royal Academy, the Fine Art Society, the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours and at major exhibitions throughout the country and abroad.

His work was strongly influenced by that of Turner and the early pre-Raphaelites.

His pictures are held by the Tate Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Laing Art Gallery, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; the Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery, and the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery.

CHARLES 1ST BARON HARDINGE OF PENSHURST

1858 - 1944

VICEROY OF INDIA 1910 - 1916

Charles 1st Baron of Penshurst, at the advanced age of 52 , attained the fulfillment of his life's ambition to follow in his grandfather's footsteps. He was appointed Viceroy of India in 1910 (and Governor-General, as his grandfather had been some 65 years before). His term of office ran from 1910 to 1916.

Lord Hardinge was Viceroy at the time of Maharajah Nripendra Narayan's death in Bexhill in 1911 (see page 75) and was Viceroy responsible for arranging the great Delhi Durbar to celebrate King George V's Coronation in that same year. He also had responsibility for the initial planning of the new capital of New Delhi - the major part of which was the work of Edwin Landseer Lutyens.

Lord and Lady Hardinge's memory is perpetuated in Delhi to this day. The Hardinge Library Building still stands and the Lady Hardinge Medical College continues to function.

The Bexhill connection was provided by George Edward Charles Hardinge, the 3rd Baron of Penshurst who resided for many years in Bexhill.

The 3rd Baron, great-great grandson of the 1st Viscount Hardinge of Lahore (Governor-General of India 1844 - 1848) and grandson of the 1st Baron Hardinge of Penshurst (Viceroy of India from 1910 to 1916) was very much the champion of "the ordinary man in the street" and on more than one occasion specifically raised questions of concern to the people of Bexhill and East Sussex in the House of Lords. He died on the 13th July,1997, at the Conquest Hospital in Hastings.

CHARLES 1ST BARON HARDINGE OF PENSHURST

VICEROY OF INDIA 1910 - 1916

BORN: 1858 DIED: 1944

1ST MARQUESS OF KEDLESTON

GEORGE NATHANIEL CURZON

VICEROY OF INDIA 1899 - 1905

BORN: 1859 DIED: 1925

GEORGE NATHANIEL CURZON

1859 - 1925

1ST MARQUIS OF KEDLESTON

George Nathaniel Curzon was born on the 11th January, 1859, at Kedleston in Derbyshire. He was educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford. He married firstly Mary Victoria Leiter in 1895 who died in 1906; and secondly, in 1917, Grace Elvina, daughter of J.Monroe Hinds and widow of Alfred Duggan. He had 3 daughters from his first marriage.

He was a brilliant scholar and travelled extensively throughout Asia and the Far East. His scholarship was recognised by numerous Honorary degrees, Fellowships and University Chancellorships.

He was elected Conservative M.P. for Southport from 1886 to 1898. He was Under-Secretary of State for India from 1891 to 1892; Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1895 to 1898; Viceroy & Governor-General of India from 1899 to 1905; Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports 1904-1905; Lord Privy Seal 1915-1916; Member of the Imperial War Cabinet 1916; Leader of the House of Lords 1916 to 1924; Lord President of the Council 1916 to 1919; and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1919 to 1924. The office of Prime Minister which he confidently expected to attain, however, eluded him.

He succeeded to an Irish Barony in 1908; was created Earl Curzon in 1911 and 1st Marquis of Kedleston in 1921.

He was noted for great archaeological conservation work during his term as Viceroy of India. It is said that he was an honoured guest at the Sackville Hotel in Bexhill. East Sussex and the National Trust owe him a great debt of gratitude for restoring nearby Bodiam Castle.

He died on the 20th March, 1925

CHARLES W. COCHRANE BAILLIE

1860 - 1940

2ND BARON LAMINGTON

Charles Wallace Alexander Napier Cochrane Baillie was born on the 29th July, 1860. He was educated at Eton and Christchurch, Oxford. He married the Hon. Mary Haughton, youngest daughter of the 1st Baron Newlands - they had one son and one daughter. He succeeded his father as 2nd Lord Lamington in 1890.

His sister, Constance, married in 1867 Reginald Windsor Sackville-West who succeeded as 7th Earl De La Warr on the death of his unmarried brother in 1873 and arranged by Royal License for the West to be dropped from the family name.

Lord Lamington was Assistant Secretary to the Prime Minister, the Marquis of Salisbury, from 1885-1887; he was elected Conservative M.P. for St. Pancras from 1886-1890. He was appointed Governor of Queensland from 1895 to 1901 coinciding with Lord Brassey's term as Governor of Victoria.

From 1903 to 1907, he was Governor of Bombay - this predated Lord Willingdon term in that office by six years. Roads which bore his name in Bombay have, since India's Independence, been renamed Dr. Anandrao Nair Road and Dr. Dadasaheb Bhadkamkar Road.

Consequent to his sister's marriage to the 7th Earl De La Warr, he was not only the 7th Earl's brother-in-law but also the uncle of the 8th Earl and related by marriage to the daughters of 1st Earl Brassey of Normanhurst.

Lord Lamington died on the 16th September, 1940.

2ND BARON LAMINGTON

CHARLES COCHRANE-BAILLIE

(Brother-in-law of 7th Earl De La Warr)

GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND 1895-1901

GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY 1903-1907

BORN: 1860 *DIED: 1940*

H.H. SIR NRIPENDRA NARAYAN

MAHARAJAH OF COOCH BEHAR

BORN: 1862. SUCCEEDED: 1863. DIED BEXHILL:18 SEPT. 1911

H.H.SIR NRIPENDRA NARAYAN

1862 - 1911

MAHARAJAH OF COOCH BEHAR

Nripendra Narayan was born on the 4th October, 1862. He succeeded his father in 1863 and formally installed in 1879 as Maharajah of a 13 Gun Salute Indian Princely State of 1300 square miles, located approximately 400 miles north of Calcutta. In 1878, he married Sunity Devi, eldest daughter of reformer Keshub Chander Sen. They had 4 sons and 3 daughters - one or more were educated at Queenwood School in Eastbourne with Princess Indira of Baroda.

Queen Victoria was godmother to their son, Prince Victor.

The Maharajah volunteered in 1897 for service in the Frontier War and in 1899 for the South African War. For his service in the Tirah, he received the Order of the Bath. He was an Hon. ADC. to King Edward VII and an Hon. Col. attached to VI King Edward's Own Cavalry. On the occasion of King Edward's Coronation in 1901, the Maharajah and his family took up residence at Moor Hall at Ninfield (demolished 1997).

On the occasion of King George V's Coronation in 1911, he leased 22 Marine Court Avenue in Bexhill. His Highness had been unwell for some two years previously and died at his Bexhill seafront residence on the 18th September, 1911. His funeral was a stately affair - his coffin passed with solemn ceremony through the streets of Bexhill and was transported by train to London for ritual Brahmo Samaj cremation.

The Bexhill Charter Trustees hold a 20 carat Gold Memorial Plate. His second son succeeded his brother as Maharajah in 1913 and returned in that year to open a Drinking Fountain (located where the De La Warr Pavilion was subsequently erected) to the memory of his father. Gayatri Devi, Rajmata of Jaipur and grand-daughter of H.H.Nripendra opened the Bexhill Museum's "Maharajah Exhibition" on the 87th anniversary of the Maharajah's funeral.

RUDYARD KIPLING

1865 - 1936

AUTHOR & POET

Batemans near Burwash (10 miles north of Battle and 20 miles from Bexhill) was the home of Rudyard Kipling for some 34 years. Rudyard, son of John Lockwood Kipling and Alice Macdonald, was born in Bombay on the 30th December, 1865 (his father held a post at the Bombay School of Art).

Left to the care of ayahs, Rudyard gained insight into Indian customs and culture normally denied to European adults. In 1871, Rudyard aged 6, with his sister Trixie aged 3, returned to England and spent six unhappy years in the care of Mr. and Mrs. Holloway at Lorne Lodge in Southsea In 1878 Rudyard was sent to the United Services School in Westward Ho which had a distinct Anglo-Indian atmosphere.

In 1882, at the age of 17 years, he returned to India and took up employment as a cub reporter with the "Civil & Military Gazette" in Lahore. In 1887, he was transferred to "The Pioneer" which, published in Allahabad, widened further his knowledge of the subcontinent. In 1888, Kipling's first great work "Plain Tales from the Hills" was published.

He returned to England in 1889 travelling by way of Burma, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Japan, United States and Canada. Success followed success. In 1892, he married Caroline Balestier - they moved and settled in to her home state of Vermont. There Josephine was born - followed by Elsie in 1896. About this time, Rudyard developed deep aversion to press intrusion into his private life - his attitude became obstructive. In 1896, the family returned to England - first settling near Torquay, later moving to Rottingdean. In 1897, son John was born. In 1899, his six year old Josephine died. His son was killed in the First World war.

Batemans,bought in 1902, remained home until he died in 1936.

RUDYARD KIPLING

AUTHOR & POET

BORN: 1865 DIED: 1936

(Plaster cast of Lord Willingdon as Viceroy at top of grand staircase in Eastbourne's Town Hall used for creation of statue onetime located in Delhi.)

1ST MARQUIS OF WILLINGDON

FREEMAN FREEMAN-THOMAS

VICEROY OF INDIA 1931 - 1936

BORN: 1866 DIED: 1941

FREEMAN FREEMAN-THOMAS

1866 - 1941

1ST MARQUIS OF WILLINGDON

Freeman Freeman-Thomas was born on the 12th September, 1866, at Ratton Manor, Willingdon. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge. He married in 1892 Marie Adelaide, youngest daughter of Lord Brassey. They had two sons Gerard and Inigo - the former was killed in the First World War.

Freeman-Thomas was Lord Brassey's ADC whilst Governor of Victoria and Liberal M.P. for Hastings from 1900 to 1906 followed by Bodmin from 1906 to 1910. Raised to the peerage in 1910, he took the title Lord Willingdon of Ratton. He played cricket for Cambridge University and the county, and was President of Sussex County Cricket Club for King George V's Coronation Year when Sussex met an All-India XI which included the Maharajah of Baroda.

Appointed Governor of Bombay from 1913 to 1919, he founded the Bombay Willingdon Club and was responsible for the construction of the Gateway of India to commemorate King George V's visit for the Coronation Delhi Durbar. From 1919 to 1924, he was Governor of Madras - from 1926 to 1931 Governor-General of Canada. Then the high point of his career, created an Earl, he was appointed Viceroy and Governor-General of India from 1931 to 1936.

He was created 1st Marquis of Willingdon and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports in 1936 - from commoner to Marquis in just over 25 years. Willingdon Crescent continues to bear his name in New Delhi - Brassey Avenue there bears the family name of the Vicereine (née Marie Adelaide Brassey). Willingdon and Brassey roads exist in Bexhill, Eastbourne and Hastings.

The cast for the life-size statue which one-time stood in Delhi can be seen at the top of the stairs in Eastbourne's Town Hall.

Marquis Willingdon died in 1941 - the Dowager Marchioness some 20 years later. The remains of both are interred in the nave of Westminster Abbey

GILBERT REGINALD SACKVILLE

1869 - 1915

8TH EARL DE LA WARR

Gilbert George Reginald Sackville born the 22nd March, 1869, educated at Charterhouse, married in 1891 the Hon. Muriel Agnes Brassey, daughter of Lord Brassey – they had one son and two daughters. Lionel Charles Cranford Sackville, eldest son of the 7th Earl De La Warr, drowned in 1890 whilst yachting in Belfast Lough, and so Gilbert George Reginald, the second son, succeeded as 8th Earl in 1896. He served with Bethune's Horse as a War Correspondent in the Boer War.

Bexhill became fashionable for discerning 'clientele' attracted by the recently opened (July 1890) Sackville Hotel then advertised in far-flung parts of the Empire. In 1902, the 8th Earl initiated Motor Racing along the seafront.. The Bexhill 100 was established as an annual May Event in 1992 to commemorate Bexhill's claim as "The Birthplace of British Motor Racing".

The 8th Earl gave wide-ranging service to the town as Captain of the Bexhill Fire Brigade; Justice of the Peace; Alderman of the East Sussex County Council; and Mayor of Bexhill for 1903/4 and again 1904/5. He created Cooden Beach Golf Course, and the seafront Kursaal as a place of high quality entertainment under the guidance of Mr.J.M.Glover - musical director of Drury Lane Theatre. The Manor was the 'hub' of "society" gatherings until the Countess in 1902 divorced her husband. In 1903, the 8th Earl married Hilda Clavering, daughter of Colonel C.Lennox Tredcroft – his second marriage ended in divorce in 1914.

On the outbreak of the First World War, the 8th Earl obtained a Royal Navy wartime commission. On returning to the Dardenelles from leave in December 1915, he was taken ill and died at Messina. He was succeeded by his son Herbrand Edward Dundonald Brassey Sackville aged 15 years.

8TH EARL DE LA WARR

GILBERT GEORGE REGINALD SACKVILLE

MAYOR OF BEXHILL 1903/4 & 1904/5

BORN: 1869 DIED: 1915

JAMES M. GLOVER

MUSICAL DIRECTOR - DRURY LANE THEATRE

MAYOR OF BEXHILL 1906/7

JAMES M. GLOVER.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR - DRURY LANE THEATRE

MAYOR OF BEXHILL 1906/7

Mr. James Glover, with his connections in the theatrical and musical worlds, as well as friends in newspaper circles, did much to promote Bexhill.

The Kursaal, a project of 8th Earl De La Warr, was opened with great ceremony on Whit Monday, 1896, by the Duchess of Teck, mother of the future Queen Mary.

The popular "resident" orchestra initially was the Viennese Band under Stanilaus Wurm. When Wurm's contract expired, the Kursaal was leased to Mr.James (Jimmy) Glover and, under his management and direction, a "national" reputation for high class entertainment was established. Artistes of international renown appeared - some 2000 concerts took place within a period of 8 years.

In 1901, the Urban Council purchased Egerton Park from John Webb, the well-known builder, associated with the 7th and 8th Earls De La Warr in developing Bexhill. In 1903, a "Shelter" (now the Museum), was built as a Concert Hall. The waste ground stretching to Brockley Road was landscaped as an extension to the Park and was opened in the summer of 1906 by the Lord Mayor of London. With the opening of the western extension, the Corporation built "The Pergola" which became a popular centre of entertainment. The first lessee was Jimmy Glover - already lessee of the Kursaal.

Plans to extend the Kursaal never materialised - it was sold by the 8th Earl De la Warr in 1908 and, renamed the Pavilion during the First World War, its popularity declined. Bought by the Corporation, it was demolished in 1936. It should, of course, be remembered that the De La Warr Pavilion, as stands today, had been opened in December 1935 by the Duke of York (later to become King George VI)

AUGUST NEVEN DU MONT

1867 - 1909

POLO PLAYER & ARTIST

August Neven Du Mont, son of the proprietor of the newspaper "Kolnische Zeitung" was born 1867 in Cologne. He moved to England in 1895 and first resided in Bournemouth - later moving to Bexhill on account of his son's ill-health and the reputation held by the town as a beneficial health resort.

In 1903, Mr. Du Mont took lease on the historic Bexhill Manor which had been granted in 1570 to the 1st Baron Buckhurst (later 1st Earl of Dorset) by Queen Elizabeth I. The Manor was acquired by the De La Warr/West family through the marriage of Elizabeth Sackville in 1813 to George West (5th Earl De La Warr).

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the Manor had been used by the Dukes of Dorset (Sackvilles) as a wild fowl shooting lodge. Following the 8th Earl De La Warr's divorce and re-marriage, the Manor was vacated by the Sackville De La Warrs and leased to the Du Mont family.

Mr. Du Mont enlarged the building - he created part of the house into a studio, and the barn was converted into a ballroom with stage for the performance of amateur theatricals. Mr. Du Mont was an artist of some merit - his "Crucifixion", painted in 1894, can be seen in the Roman Catholic Church of St.. Mary Magdalene in Bexhill.

Mr. Du Mont was a popular figure - well received by all who came in contact with him. He was a polo player of some repute and rode with the hounds. He succeeded the Hon. Thomas Allnutt Brassey in 1906 as Master of the East Sussex Foxhounds.

He died in 1909 at the early age of 42 years.

AUGUST NEVEN DU MONT

DEVELOPED BEXHILL MANOR BUILDING

BORN: 1867 DIED: 1909

H.H. SIR RANJITSINGHI VIBHAJI

MAHARAJAH JAMSAHEB OF NAWANAGAR

RENOWNED SUSSEX C.C. CRICKETER

BORN: 1872 SUCCEEDED: 1907 DIED: 1933

H. H. SIR RANJITSINHJI VIBHAJI

1872 - 1933

MAHARAJAH JAMSAHEB OF NAWANAGAR GCSI.,GBE.

Born, son of Jiwansinhji of the Jadejas Rajput clan, on the 10th September, 1872, at Sarodar in the Kathiawar Province of India, he was adopted by uncle Jamsaheb Vibhaji in 1879 as heir presumptive but superseded by later-born Jaswantsinhji.

Ranji was educated at Rajkumar College; St.Faith's and Trinity College,Cambridge. Unmarried but deeply attached to longstanding Cambridge friend, Edith Borissow. Succeeded as Jamsaheb of Nawanagar (a 13 Gun Salute Princely State in Northwest India) on death of Jaswantsinghi in 1906.

He played cricket for Fitzwilliam Hall in 1889, the Cassandra Club in 1890, regularly for Trinity in 1891 and for the University in the following year. He made his debut for Sussex in 1895 against the MCC at Lords scoring 77 not out and 150, took six wickets and two catches. He scored a total of 18,594 runs in 294 innings. His highest was 285 not out in 1901 against Somerset at Taunton. He headed Sussex averages from 1895 to 1902 and captained the side from 1895 to 1903. His last appearance was in 1920. President for the 1930 Season, he saw his nephew Duleepsinhji achieve his record 333 runs.

Ranji played at Bexhill on Lord Cantelupe's Ground against an Earl de La Warr's XI in August, 1896 - and despite the dangerous bowling of Surrey's Lockwood scored 49 of the Sussex team's total of 71. He played at the *Hastings Priory Meadow Ground in 1902 when the County scored their record of 705 for 8 wickets declared against Surrey - Ranji scored 234.

On leave from the Front in 1915, a shooting accident on the Yorkshire moors cost him loss of sight in his right eye.

*The Hastings Priory Meadow Ground was demolished in 1996 to make way for the new Shopping Precinct.

He died the 2nd April, 1933, at the Jam Palace in Jamnagar.

MARIE A. FREEMAN-THOMAS

1875 - 1960

1ST MARCHIONESS OF WILLINGDON

Marie Adelaide, youngest daughter of Thomas Brassey (cr.1886 1st Baron later Earl) and Anna Allnutt. was born in 1875. She was the sister-in-law of the 8th Earl De La Warr; her first cousin, Hilda Madeleine Brassey married the 8th Duke of Richmond and cousin, Henry Brassey married Violet, the 8th Duke's sister.

In 1892, she married Freeman Freeman-Thomas - they had two sons Gerard and Inigo. Gerard was killed in the 1st World War. As Lady Willingdon, she accompanied her husband when he was appointed Governor of Bombay in 1913 - then Governor of Madras (1919-1924); Governor-General of Canada (1926-1931) and finally Viceroy of India (1931-1936).

Lady Willingdon's portrait hangs in the entranceway of the Willingdon Club founded by her husband in Bombay. Brassey Avenue in Delhi bears the family name. The Swimming Bath of the Gymkhanna Club in Delhi is named after her. Her portrait, painted by W.A.Porter in 1900, hangs in the entrance hall of Hastings Town Hall (her husband was Liberal M.P. for Hastings from 1900 to 1906).

Lady Willingdon laid the foundation stone in 1931 of the extension to Hastings Museum in Cambridge Road which was specially built "to house" the Durbar Hall purchased by her father at the 1886 Indian & Colonial Exhibition and donated by her brother in 1919 to the Hastings Borough Corporation.

She was honoured by being the recipient of the Order of the Crown of India and the Order of the British Empire.

She died on the 30th January 1960 - her remains are interred with those of her husband in the nave of Westminster Abbey.

MARCHIONESS OF WILLINGDON

MARIE ADELAIDE FREEMAN-THOMAS nee BRASSEY

BORN: 1875 DIED: 1960

EDNA MAY

1878 - 1948

AMERICAN 'LIGHT MUSICAL' ARTISTE

Record runs Shaftesbury Theatre "The Belle of New York" - 1898
"Three Little Maids" - 1902
"The School Girl" - 1903. "The Belle of Mayfair" - 1906

EDNA MAY

1878 - 1948

'LIGHT MUSICAL' ARTISTE

Born May Pettie on the 2nd September, 1878, Syracuse, New York State, on embarking on a stage career she adopted the "stage" name of Edna May. She was a classical beauty.

She conquered London in 1898 with a record run of 697 appearances as Violet Gray in "The Belle of New York" at the Shaftesbury Theatre. She continued as a West End favourite in "Three Little Maids" (1902), "The School Girl" (1903) and "The Belle of Mayfair" (1906). She was a great friend of Ellen Terry and participated in the latter's Jubilee Celebration Performance at Drury Lane which provides connection with Mr.James Glover, Musical Director of Drury Lane and Bexhill's Kursaal.

The following announcement in the "Bexhill Chronicle" dated Saturday, 30th March, 1901, may have some relevance:

KURSAAL EASTER CARNIVAL

"THE BELLE OF NEW YORK"

"We are informed this is an excellent company and will number 40 persons"

The "Encyclopaedia of Musical Artistes" tells us Edna May had a brilliant career, retired from the stage on the occasion of her marriage in 1907 - and died in Lausanne on the 2nd January,1948. Although some discrepancy in dates, her name has been linked with that of Raj Rajendra (eldest son and successor to Maharajah Nripendra Narayan of Cooch Behar) who 'ruled' from 1911 to 1913. Princess Gayatri Devi (Rajmata of Jaipur and grand daughter of Maharajah Nripendra who died in Bexhill in 1911) writes in her Memoirs:

"My father's elder brother, Raj Rajendra, the Maharajah of Cooch Behar, had fallen in love with the English (actually American) actress, Edna May, but his family had refused permission for him to marry her". Princess Gayatri's father succeeded his brother, Raj Rajendra, as Maharajah in 1913.

H.H. JITENDRA NARAYAN

1886 - 1922

MAHARAJAH OF COOCH BEHAR

H.H. Prince Jitendra Narayan, second son of Maharajah Nripendra Narayan of Cooch Behar and Maharani Sunity Devi was born on the 20th December, 1886. Educated at Eton and the Imperial Cadet College, he married Princess Indira of Baroda in August 1913 - some three weeks prior to the death of his elder brother, Maharajah Rajendra, whom he succeeded.

H.H. Prince Jitendra was present in Bexhill with his three brothers for the funeral of their father, Maharajah Nripendra, on the 21st September, 1911. After succeeding his elder brother as Maharajah in September, 1913, he returned to Bexhill and opened a Drinking Fountain to the memory of his father who died in Bexhill - located where the De La Warr Pavilion was subsequently built.

Maharajah Jitendra and Maharani Indira had two sons and three daughters:

His elder son, H.H. Prince Jagaddipendra, was educated at St.Cyprian's School in Eastbourne - Harrow and Trinity Hall, Cambridge- and succeeded on the death of his father in 1922.

H.H. Prince Indrajitendra, second son, was born in Poona in 1918 and was educated for a time at Gibbs School in London.

H.H. Princess Ila, eldest daughter, was born in Calcutta in 1914 and was educated at Ravenscroft School in Eastbourne.

H.H. Princess Gayatri Devi was born in London on 23rd May, 1919 and was educated for a period at Glendower School in London - then finishing Schools in Switzerland.

H.H. Princess Menaka, youngest daughter, was born in 1920.

H.H. Maharajah Jitendra and Maharani Indira holidayed with their children in Sussex in 1922 - Jitendra fell ill on this visit and died in a London nursing home on the 20th December, 1922 (his 36th birthday).

H.H. JITENDRA NARAYAN

MAHARAJAH OF COOCH BEHAR

BORN: 1886 SUCCEEDED: 1913 DIED: 1922

H.H. MAHARANI INDIRA OF COOCH BEHAR
(NÉE PRINCESS OF BARODA)
BORN: 1892 MARRIED: 1913 DIED: 1968

MAHARANI OF COOCH BEHAR

1892 - 1968

NÉE PRINCESS INDIRA GAEKWAR OF BARODA

Princess Indira, daughter of H.H. Maharajah Sayajirao Gaekwar of Baroda, was born in 1892. She was betrothed by her parents to Maharajah Scindia (more than 20 years her senior) of Gwalior - a Maratha State as Baroda.

Princess Indira attended Queenwood School in Eastbourne with the daughters of H.H. Maharajah Nripendra of Cooch Behar. She became friends with their brother, H.H. Prince Jitendra. The friendship "developed" in 1911 during the Coronation Delhi Durbar celebrations. The couple eloped in July 1913 and were married in London. We are told by Princess Gayatri Devi, Rajmata of Jaipur, daughter of Jitendra and Indira, in her memoirs, that three weeks after the marriage her uncle Maharajah Rajendra of Cooch Behar died and Prince Jitendra succeeded as next brother in line (Rajendra died at Cromer on the 1st September, 1913). Maharajah Jitendra and Maharani Indira had two sons and three daughters.

H.H. Maharajah Jitendra died from pneumonia in London on the 20th December, 1922 (his 36th birthday), and was succeeded by his eldest son Prince Jagaddipendra, aged 7 years. His mother, Dowager Maharani Indira acted as Regent until the young Maharajah reached his majority. The Dowager Maharani was a frequent visitor to England. As already mentioned, Maharajah Jagaddipendra attended St.Cyprian's School and his sister, Princess Ila, Ravenscroft School - both in Eastbourne. Princess Gayatri Devi went to Glendower School in London whilst staying with her mother at the family house in South Audley Street - then later went to Finishing Schools in Switzerland.

The Dowager Maharani Indira of Cooch Behar died in Bombay on the 12th September, 1968.

ERICH MENDELSOHN

1887 - 1953

DE LA WARR PAVILION ARCHITECT

Erich Mendelsohn was born on the 21st March, 1887, at Allenstein in East Prussia (now Poland). He studied architecture in Berlin and Munich. In 1915, he married Louise Maas. He opened a Studio in Berlin after the First World War. In 1921, he lost the sight in one eye - the result of a tumour. In 1924, he made his first visit to America.

In 1926/7 he designed the Cohen-Epstein Store in Duisburg; in 1926/8 the Schochen Store in Stuttgart, the Waga Complex and Universum Cinema in Berlin; in 1927/8 the Petersdorf Store in Breslau; in 1928/9 the Schocken Store in Chemnitz; 1929/30 the German Metallurgic Federation and Mendelsohn House in Berlin; and in 1931/2 the Columbushaus in Berlin.

Following Hitler's rise to power, he moved in 1933 to England and began his collaboration with Serge Chermayeff.

In 1934, they won the competition initiated by the 9th Earl De La Warr as Mayor (1932-35) for the De La Warr Pavilion with their welded steel-framed design. The conditions of competition entry laid down, in general outline, the sort of building Bexhill Corporation had in mind. The Pavilion was opened by the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth) on the 12th December, 1935.

In 1936, Mendelsohn's collaboration with Chermayeff came to an end. Between 1936 and 1939, he maintained studios in London and Jerusalem. In 1939, he obtained British citizenship and was made a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. In 1939, he moved to Palestine and, in 1941, to New York. In 1946, he was granted American citizenship - from which time most of his work was done in the United States.

He died on the 12th September, 1953.

ERICH MENDELSOHN

ARCHITECT - BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION

BORN GERMANY; 1887 DIED: 1953

JOHN LOGIE BAIRD

TELEVISION PIONEER

BORN: 1888 DIED: 1946

JOHN LOGIE BAIRD

1888 - 1946

TELEVISION PIONEER

John Logie Baird resided in Station Road, Bexhill, from 1941 until his death on the 14th June, 1946.

Youngest son of the Reverend John Baird and Jessie née Inglis, he was born on the 13th August 1888 in Helensburgh on the Firth of Clyde. He was educated at Larchfield School and then attended the Royal Technical College in Glasgow where he obtained his Diploma in 1914. Susceptible to bronchial illness, was classified "medically unfit" for military service.

He went through "crazy phases" to fund inventive ideas: "Diamond Making" - "The Baird Undersock" - "Jam-Making" etc. On return from visiting Trinidad in 1921, he moved to Hastings where he lodged at 21 Linton Crescent. In 1923, he rented an attic room in Queen's Arcade and there completed his first crude but workable television transmitter. In late 1924, he returned to London and took premises at 22 Frith Street to perfect his television mechanical system - on the 25th October, 1925, his efforts were crowned with success. In February, 1928, a television signal was transmitted to New York. In 1932, 5,000 people packed the Metropole Cinema in Victoria, London, to see the "Derby" televised - a great achievement.

In 1931, Baird married Margaret Albu - they had one son, Malcolm, and one daughter, Diana.

The electronic system was making headway. In 1932, EMI had success with the cathode ray tube. With the introduction of the 405-line electronic system in 1934 against Baird's 240 lines, EMI-Marconi moved ahead. Baird was now living at Crescent Wood Road, Sydenham, and there concentrated on colour, 3D and large screen Cinema Television. With the outbreak of the Second World War - transmissions were halted.

Much conjecture exists as to Baird's war contributions.

HERBRAND E. D. SACKVILLE

1900 - 1976

9TH EARL DE LA WARR

Herbrand Edward Dundonald Brassey Sackville, son of the 8th Earl de La Warr and Countess Muriel Agnes, second daughter of the 1st Earl Brassey, was born on the 20th June, 1900.

He succeeded his father, Gilbert George Reginald Sackville, at the age of 15. After Eton, he served in the First World War in the Royal Navy as an Able Seaman - the experience, followed by that gained up at Oxford after the war, undoubtedly, accounts for his early acceptance of Socialism.

The 9th Earl was the first hereditary peer to sit on the Labour Benches and, after Pitt the Younger, the youngest Cabinet minister to hold office. He subsequently joined the Conservative Party. He held the following positions and offices: Parliamentary Under-Secretary War Office 1929-1930; Parliamentary Secretary Board of Education 1935-1936; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies 1936-1937; Lord Privy Seal 1937-1938; President of the Board of Education 1938-1940; Chairman Estate Committee National Trust 1950-1951 & 1955-1970; Postmaster-General 1951-1955; Chairman Agricultural Research Council 1944-1949; Lord-in-Waiting 1924 & 1929-1931; Chairman of the Royal Commonwealth Society 1960.

As Mayor of Bexhill (1932-1935), he initiated the competition for the design of the De La Warr Pavilion as stands today.

He married firstly in 1920 Diana, daughter of Gerard Leigh and Mrs. Halsey. They had two sons and one daughter. The elder son, William Herbrand, succeeded as 10th Earl in 1976. The younger son, Flying Officer Thomas Henry Jordan Sackville, born 13th November 1922, was killed on the 14th May 1943 aged 21, whilst on operations.

His first wife died in 1966 - he married Sylvia Countess of Kilmuir in 1968.

He died on the 28th January, 1976.

9TH EARL DE LA WARR

HERBRAND EDWARD DUNDONALD SACKVILLE

MAYOR OF BEXHILL 1932 - 1935

BORN: 1900 SUCCEEDED: 1915 DIED: 1976

10TH EARL DE LA WARR

WILLIAM HERBRAND SACKVILLE

BORN: 1922 SUCCEEDED: 1976 DIED: 1988

WILLIAM HERBRAND SACKVILLE

1922 - 1988

10TH EARL DE LA WARR

William Herbrand Sackville, the eldest son of the 9th Earl De La Warr and Diana, daughter of Gerard Leigh, was born in 1922. He was educated at Eton. In the Second World War, he served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Sussex Regiment from 1941 to 1943, then with the Parachute Regiment - promoted to Captain in 1945. A Conservative candidate in 1945, he contested unsuccessfully Bethnal Green. In 1946, he married Anne Rachel, only daughter of Geoffrey Devas of Hunton Court, Maidstone. They had two sons and one daughter. He succeeded as 10th Earl on the death of his father in 1976.

Although a man with many business connections, he maintained the family's historic links with Bexhill.. He was President of the High Woods Preservation Society; on the council of Ancaster House School; Chairman of the committee when the merger with Charters Towers took place; and was trustee of the Old Town Jubilee Clock.

He learnt "the hard way" about industrial life by working as plain Bill Sackville for six months in a Bolton cotton mill - and then as a driver for Midland Red buses in Birmingham before becoming a director of its parent company British Electric Traction. He was Managing Director of Rediffusion from 1974 to 1979 and a Director of the Kent & Sussex Courier. He was Chairman of the Sussex County Playing Fields Association and Deputy Lieutenant of East Sussex.

He was deeply and sadly affected by the unbelieveable devastation caused by the Great Storm of 1987 to the trees of Ashdown Forest which had been owned by the Sackvilles since the early 17th century.

He died on Monday, 8th February 1988 at the age of 66, having fallen under a tube train at St.James's Park Station in London.

E.W.C. BOWREY.

MAYOR OF BEXHILL

1923/4 & 1944/6

Mr.L.J. Bartley in his book "The Story of Bexhill" tells us that Mr.Bowrey retired to Bexhill from business in India. We find Bowrey Place located off Hillside Road (a few yards from Offa Crossroads) bearing his name in Bexhill. Adjacent to Bowrey Place, we have Bayencourt North and Bayencourt South.

After the First World War, many towns located in southern counties, "adopted" and forged links with devastated French towns and villages. Such "an association" was established between Bexhill and the village of Bayencourt, near Arras, where the 5th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment had been quartered in 1916.

Mr.E.W.C. Bowrey, Mayor of Bexhill in 1923/4, fostered the idea of the town subscribing to provide Bayencourt with a water tower and a piped water supply. In 1924, as Mayor of the then Borough of Bexhill, he led a civic party to Bayencourt for the inauguration ceremony. A further donation and civic visit was made when it was found that the work had been completed within the estimate.

The Bexhill Observer 23rd September 1994 issue reminds us of the event under "IN DAYS GONE BY" with the following extract from an earlier issue "It is 63 years since Bexhillians clubbed together to provide £250 - then a King's ransom - to provide the war ravaged village of Bayencourt, near Arras, with a much needed water supply. Another tide of war has washed over Bayencourt since that time. But the villagers never forgot the generosity of the people from an English town they had never seen".

It is strange to find some 75 years later, South East Water owned by the French Group SAUR.

E.W.C. BOWREY

MAYOR OF BEXHILL

1923/4 & 1944/6

GAYATRI DEVI

RAJMATA OF JAIPUR

GRAND-DAUGHTER OF MAHARAJAH NRIPENDRA
OF COOCH BEHAR

BORN: 1919 MARRIED: 1940

GAYATRI DEVI

1919 -

PRINCESS OF COOCH BEHAR
RAJMATA OF JAIPUR

Princess Gayatri Devi, second daughter of Maharajah Jitendra Narayan of Cooch Behar and Maharani Indira, was born in London on the 23rd May, 1919. Whilst living at South Audley Street, London, she attended Glendower Day School. In the 30s she attended schools in Switzerland - Les Noisetiers, near Leysin, and Brillantmont in Lausanne. She married (wife No.3) Maharajah Sawai Man Singh of Jaipur on 9th May, 1940.

The marital home was the Rambagh Palace in Jaipur - now a hotel of international repute.

In March 1949, Maharajah Sawai Man Singh was selected to be Rajpramukh (Head of State) of the newly constituted Rajasthan Union. Gayatri Devi was a renowned hostess - entertaining visiting Royalty and Heads of State.

In October 1949 - son Jagat, only child of the 3rd marriage was born in Bombay. In 1962, standing for the Swantantara Party, she was elected M.P. with overwhelming majority.

In 1964, her husband was appointed Indian Ambassador to Spain. He died in 1970 on the polo field at Cirencester.

In 1971, a Bill was passed with Presidential assent on the 28th December which de-recognised the princes - privileges, titles and privy purses were abolished.

On the 21st September,1998, the 87th Anniversary of the funeral of her grandfather, Gayatri Devi, Princess of Cooch Behar and Rajmata of Jaipur, visited Bexhill and opened the the Bexhill Museum's Exhibition honouring H.H. Maharajah Nripendra Narayan who died at his seafront residence in Bexhill on the 18th September,1911.

MARIANA ALICE BROWNING
FOUNDER BEEHIVE SCHOOL 1876 - 1964

In 1901, Bexhill had 4 Church Schools, more than 30 Independent Schools and a population of 12,213 people. Almost a century later, we find the same number of Church Schools, 8 State Schools, only 1 Independent School and a population of 41,000. This dramatic rise in population and fall in Independent educational "facilities" reflect the social changes which have taken place in Bexhill over the past century. These changes may perhaps be highlighted by looking at one of the one-time leading Independent Schools in Bexhill and seeing it as representative of a system which contributed to making Bexhill as exists today.

The Beehive School was founded by Miss Mariana Alice Browning, sister of Oscar Browning - Cambridge don and master at Eton. She started the School with eight boarding girls in Windsor in 1876 - founded, it has been said, to accommodate and educate the sisters of boys attending Eton.

The school moved to Bexhill in 1900 where it first occupied two houses in Dorset Road. It grew over the years both in reputation and size until it accommodated an average of some 80 boarders. Miss Browning laid great stress on the importance of loyalty, trustworthiness, reliability and leading a useful life. Religion was always to the forefront in fostering this.

Miss Browning died on All Saints' Day 1910 and was buried at Windsor. Miss Catherine Woodward, who had joined the staff in 1878 and taught history, succeeded as headmistress.

In 1923, Miss de Putron O.B.E., on the resignation of Miss Woodward, having bought the goodwill of the school, succeeded as headmistress.

MARIANA ALICE BROWNING

FOUNDER - BEEHIVE SCHOOL

1876 - 1964

MISS A.M. DE PUTRON, O.B.E.

HEADMISTRESS

BEEHIVE SCHOOL - BEXHILL

1921 - 1953

MISS A.M. De PUTRON.
HEADMISTRESS BEEHIVE SCHOOL
1923 - 1953

During the First World War, Miss de Putron had served in France with the Q.M.A.A.C as a Deputy Controller.

Notes used by Miss de Putron for a speech given on the occasion of the School's Diamond Jubilee in 1936 are enlightening: "I remarked to a friend that we were fortunate to be celebrating our Diamond Jubilee when so many private schools were coming to an end. She (the friend) replied '*You* need not worry, *your school* stands for something.' "It seemed to me that it was an answer Miss Browning would have given".

"The purpose of our education is religion, sound learning, and good manners. Every girl if she is to play her part in the world, must first learn her duty to God, then she will be able to do her duty to her neighbour . . . . she will learn to serve others and life will be increasingly purposeful. Sound learning the School has always endeavoured to impart. Subjects taught have varied through the years but we still give first place to languages, then English and History - especially, today, Modern European History and Current Politics. Lastly, good manners. These, I know are widely disregarded today by the pushing and selfish in this rushing age but surely they are worth cultivating".

The school excelled at cricket.

With the invasion of France by the Germans in May 1940, Miss de Putron arranged for the school to move to Lydham Manor at Bishops Castle in Shropshire for the duration of the war. In 1944, Broadoak Manor was purchased - the school returned to Bexhill on the 25th September, 1945 with a Junior School at nearby Ellerslie. Miss Wilson B.Sc. succeeded as Headmistress in 1953, followed by Mrs.Benson-Davies M.A. in 1959 and Miss Bowden in 1963. The School closed in 1964.

ANNA LADY BRASSEY

1839 - 1887

Anna (familiarly known Annie) Allnutt, only daughter of John Allnutt, was born in 1839. She married on the 9th October, 1860, Thomas Brassey - eldest son of the famous railway contractor. They resided at Beauport Park, near Hastings, until Normanhurst Court at Catsfield was ready for occupation in 1870. Thomas Brassey (Jr) was Liberal M.P. for Hastings from 1868 until 1885 - he was Civil Lord of the Admiralty from 1880 to 1884. He received the KCB in 1881 and was created Baron Brassey of Bulkeley in 1886.

Thomas and Annie had 5 children: Thomas Allnutt born 1863; Mabelle Annie born 1865; Constance Alberta born 1867 - died aged 5 years in Paris from scarlet fever; Muriel Agnes born 1872 ; and Marie Adelaide born 1875.

Her husband, a keen yachtsman, obtained his Master's Certificate in 1872. Although Annie Brassey suffered badly from sea-sickness, she wrote detailed accounts of their voyages and was absorbed in collecting artefacts. Her books brought fame - "The Voyage in the Sunbeam", published in 1878, was a best seller and was translated into several languages.

In 1886, Lord Brassey purchased the intricately carved Durbar Hall (displayed at the South Kensington Colonial and India Exhibition) to house Lady Brassey's collection of artefacts at their 24 Park Lane London residence.

Lady Brassey died and was buried at sea on the 14th September 1887 whilst en route from Australia to Mauritius - an impressive Memorial Tablet exists in the Catsfield Church.

The Durbar Hall was donated with the Park Lane collections to the Hastings Corporation - now an annexe of the Hastings Museum in St.John's Place. The Bexhill Museum received some of the collections located at Normanhurst Court.

Mr. Julian Porter, Curator of Bexhill Museum, covers in some detail Lady Brassey's Collections and their present locations in his book "Annie Lady Brassey".

ANNA LADY BRASSEY

TRAVEL WRITER & 'ARTEFACTS' COLLECTOR

BORN; 1839 DIED:: 1887

HENRY SARGENT

CURATOR - BEXHILL MUSEUM

BORN: 1893 DIED: 1983

HENRY SARGENT

1891 - 1983

CURATOR - BEXHILL MUSEUM

Henry Sargent, was Curator of Bexhill Museum for 63 years. He died in Bexhill Hospital on the 12th December,1983, at the age of 92. Born 1891 in Hastings, he obtained a bursary to the Hastings School of Art. His special interests were Natural History and Photography. His first academic position was in Hastings at the Brassey Institute - founded in 1879 by Thomas Brassey (cr. Baron 1886 & Earl 1911). The Institute was the meeting place of celebrities - there he came into contact with writers of the day and became a friend of Rudyard Kipling who lived at nearby Burwash.

He was a confirmed pacifist. For the duration of the First World War, he was imprisoned. He suffered great hardship - first in Wormwood Scrubs and then Dartmoor - denied access to serious reading, enforced silence became mental torture.

As a concession to his sensitivity, the Governor of Dartmoor allowed him his wig - for he had lost his hair at the age of 10 as the result of measles. Transferred to Wakefield Prison, he worked as a hospital orderly until his release.

Employment after the war was difficult to obtain. Bexhill Museum had been founded in 1914. Henry Sargent was appointed first as assistant curator in February, 1920 - then confirmed as Curator later that same year.

The Museum Association was founded in 1922. Its secretary, Mrs. Susan Ronnie, in his Obituary, tells us: "As borough meteorologist for 49 years, he kept meticulous records. He gave thousands of lectures to schools. He held meetings for children in the Museum on Saturday mornings. It is the end of an era. Long may he be remembered for all he has done to make life a better thing for so many "

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